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Aspects of Portuguese Rule in the Arabian Gulf, 1521–1622

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Abstract

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On

Aspects of Portuguese Rule in the Arabian Gulf, 1521 – 1622.

This study deals with Portuguese rule over the Arabian Gulf from 1521, after the occupation of Hormuz, Bahrain and Qatif, to 1622 when Portuguese power declined after the capture of Hormuz by an English-Persian alliance.

The work is organised into an introduction and five thematic chapters, each of which addresses one or more political and economic aspects of Portuguese rule in this period. The introduction provides a summary of the primary Portuguese sources, and other English, Arabic, and Turkish sources which pertain to the Portuguese invasion of the Gulf. There then follows a short description of the geography of the Gulf.

Chapter One deals with Portuguese expansion and objectives in the East. In addition, the chapter discusses the commercial contacts between India and the Gulf before the Portuguese arrived. Particular attention is paid to the political and social structure of Hormuz. Chapter Two discusses the economic life of the Gulf during the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. This chapter also examines the commercial experiences or influences that the Portuguese brought to the people of the Gulf, and the economic aspects of the Portuguese presence.

Chapter Three examines the basis and character of Portugal's political administration in the East in general, and in the Gulf in particular. This chapter also addresses relations between the Portuguese viceroyalty and the local governors. Chapter Four opens with a discussion of local resistance in the Gulf against the Portuguese. It deals also with the arrival of the Ottomans in the Gulf in the sixteenth century and their conflict with the Portuguese, and with Portuguese relations with Persia during the reign of Shah Abbas.

Finally, Chapter Five assesses the reasons for the collapse of Portuguese domination in the Gulf in 1622 and its effects on the region. It discusses in detail why Hormuz, as one of the most important props of the Portuguese empire in the East, fell as an easy victim, even though it was thriving economically.

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Abbreviations

<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AHU	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino
ANTT	Arquivo Nacional da Torre de Tombo (Lisbon)
APO	Archivo Portuguez Oriental
BNL-FG	Fundo Geral Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa
C C	Corpo Cronológico (in the ANTT)
<i>Cart. Ormuz</i>	<i>Cartas de Ormuz a D. João de Castro</i>
Doc.	Document
<i>DRI</i>	<i>Documentos Remetidos da India ou Livros das Monções</i>
<i>DUP</i>	<i>Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam, New edition</i>
fl., fls.	Folio(s)
<i>GEPB</i>	<i>Grande Enciclooédia Portuguesa e Brasleira</i>
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>IESHR</i>	<i>The Indian Economic and Social History Review</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JOS</i>	<i>Journal of Omani Studies</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Economic History</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic society</i>
liv.	Book
<i>SEHME</i>	<i>Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East</i>

Glossary

<i>Alcaide</i>	Portuguese official; ‘chief of the sea’
Bab	A narrow strait; a gate
Bahar	Persian unit of weight; in different parts of Asia, it was worth about 210-30 kg
<i>Caffila</i>	Caravan
<i>Câmara municipal</i>	Municipal chamber of a city or town
<i>Capitão-mór</i>	Captain-Major
<i>Carreira da Índia</i>	Cape route or trade route via the Cape of Good Hope
<i>Cartaz</i>	A passport or safe-conduct for a ship, given in exchange for a fee or as a diplomatic privilege
<i>Casa da Índia</i>	The ‘India House’ in Lisbon, at which goods arriving from Asia were unloaded and auctioned, and customs-duties collected
<i>Casado</i>	Literally a married settler, and in fact used as a juridical category to denote a permanent resident of a settlement at times sub-divided into ‘white’ (<i>branco</i>) and ‘black’ (<i>preto</i>)
<i>Coja</i>	Or <i>Khwaja</i> in Persian, a respected person
<i>Cruzado</i>	Portuguese coin, worth 360 <i>reis</i> and 2.00 <i>ashrafis</i> in the sixteenth century, and 400 <i>reis</i> in the seventeenth century
Dhow	Largest lateen-rigged Arab or Indian ship of the time
<i>Dom</i>	A title of the Portuguese nobility, from the Latin <i>dominus</i> , abbreviated as D. The feminine is Dona
<i>Ducat</i>	A gold coin, originally Venetian but used also in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe
<i>Estado da Índia</i>	Portuguese ‘State of India’
<i>Faramān</i>	Arabic (in Persian <i>farmān</i>), an order or decree from the Shah of Persia
<i>Fazenda Real</i>	Portuguese Royal Treasury
<i>Feitor</i>	Factor, Crown or private trading agent
<i>Feitoria</i>	Factory, Crown trading post
<i>Fidalgo</i>	Literally <i>filho de algo</i> , ‘son of a somebody’; a member of the upper nobility, corresponds to Spanish <i>hidalgo</i>
<i>Fusta</i>	A small ship with Latin shape
Grab	Arabic: <i>ghurāb</i> (crow), a coasting vessel ranging up to 300 tons, with one or two lateen-rigged masts according to size: smaller ones also carried oars
Imám	Religious leader
Jabal	Hill or mountain
Jazírat	An island; sometimes a peninsula
Khulas	Type of date famous in the Gulf
Khúr	Bay or creek; a deep channel between shoals

Lascar	Arabic: <i>askar</i> , most commonly a native sailor but, at that time, also a native soldier or artilleryman
<i>Mouros</i>	Moors, Portuguese expression for the Muslims
Mrziban	Type of date famous in the Gulf
<i>Muqarrarīyas</i>	Persian expression for a fixed tribute
Nakhoda	Persian: <i>nākhudā</i> , the skipper of any native or country craft in the Gulf
<i>Naveta</i>	Small ocean-going vessel
<i>Nua</i>	Large Portuguese ship or carrack
<i>Pataca</i>	Silver Portuguese coin worth 1.22 <i>ashrafi</i>
Quintal	Unit of weight, the Portuguese hundred weight of 130 lb.; the light quintal weighed 51.405 kg and the heavy quintal 58.7 kg
<i>Reis</i>	The basic accounting unit in the Portuguese monetary system (singular <i>real</i>)
Shahbandār	Persian: harbour-master or chief of customs
Shāhī	Persian currency, 200 <i>shāhīs</i> usually worth 1 <i>toman</i>
Shaikh	Chief, or old man
Shatt	Fresh water river; large river
Suhailī	South-westerly wind
<i>Tanga</i>	Silver coin worth 60 <i>reis</i> , from the Indo-Muslim <i>tanka</i>
<i>Toman</i>	Still the currency of Iran. During the period of this study its value declined from about £3 to about £1
Ushur	An Arabic expression of port duties
<i>Veador</i>	Comptroller
<i>Vedor da Fazenda</i>	Financial superintendent
<i>Xerafim (Ashrafi)</i>	Silver coin worth 300 <i>reis</i> , from the Egyptian <i>ashrafi</i>

Introduction

Portugal, a small kingdom on the fringes of Europe, in just a few years established an empire in the East, from East Africa and the Arabian Gulf¹ to the Indonesian archipelago and China Sea.

Portuguese motives centred essentially on the economic potential of seeking out the places of origin of spices, and they used their modern European naval power and political systems to carry out these aims. From an early stage in their voyages to the Indian Ocean they unilaterally declared that all spice trade was to be conducted by themselves or their allies. In addition, the Portuguese strove to enhance their image in history by encouraging their chroniclers to write and publish works on the heroism of *Os Lusíadas* in the age of discovery.²

This study deals with the period of Portuguese control over the Gulf, from 1521 after they occupied the kingdom of Hormuz, Bahrain and Qatif on the Arabian coast, to 1622. The period covered by this thesis was a critical one in the history of the Gulf, beginning with the rise of Portuguese power and ending with its decline. The year 1521 saw the first revolt in the Gulf against the Portuguese, less than four months after the capture of Bahrain and Portugal's claim that it controlled the entire region. The terminal date, 1622, marked the end of Portuguese supremacy in the Gulf: after the capture of Hormuz by English and Persian forces, the Portuguese lost it forever. It was therefore the year in which the major concentration of Portuguese power in the Gulf collapsed.

The period of Portuguese influence in the Gulf has been generally regarded as one of the most important periods in the region's history. When the Portuguese invaded

¹ Since the early 1960s the Arab states have substituted 'Arabian Gulf' for 'Persian'. The usage has not been commonly adopted in English. In this thesis the neutral term 'Gulf' will be used to avoid confusion.

² See below, pp. 20-25.

at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Gulf underwent a significant number of events and processes which changed its political and social life. Within this context, the arrival of the Portuguese in the East and the occupation of Hormuz are no longer viewed as uncritically as they once were. This study will examine and discuss Portuguese activities in both the economic and political spheres. One of the purposes of this work is not merely to supply historical materials but also to add pertinent interpretation of those materials. It is an attempt to lay the foundations for an economic and political history of the Gulf during the Portuguese period. The core function of this study is to assess whether these activities affected relations between the Portuguese and other local powers in the Gulf, and the Persians in particular and, by extension, if these relationships were responsible for the fall of Hormuz in 1622. Some writers believe that the facts always speak for themselves. Nevertheless, as most people know from their own experience, 'facts' often speak with conflicting voices.

A belief persists that the Portuguese were able to control trade routes by keeping their hands tightly on the strategic positions and the important islands and straits. All of this enabled them to monitor trade between Europe and Asia, and also that which took place among Asian ports themselves – the 'country trades'. They therefore changed the face of commerce by diverting it from traditional networks to the oceanic Cape route.³ In addition, by claiming sovereignty over the ocean, the Portuguese claimed to be able to control maritime trade and its taxes, because it is well known that the vast bulk of their revenue came from the sea, not from the land.⁴ These activities, in fact, had the financial support of the great merchant princes of Antwerp, who, realising the revolutionary change in trade that the Portuguese discoveries involved, hastened to enjoy the benefits. With Antwerp's aid, the Portuguese fleets in the east were kept

³ M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofez, *Asian Trade and European influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague, 1962).

⁴ M. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London, 2003), p. 118.

reinforced by the home government. Armada followed armada, and the Portuguese dominated Indian waters.⁵ Within about eight years, the Portuguese were able to make further progress in their plans to occupy the two trade arms of the Indian Ocean; first the Gulf, attacked by Afonso da Albuquerque, and second the Red Sea.

When the Portuguese arrived, the Gulf was not heavily populated. Most of the inhabitants lived on the coast and earned their livelihoods through trade. There were limited ways of living off the land, nomadic cattle breeding being one, and also sources of income connected with the transportation of merchandise by *caffilas* (caravans) and the sale of Arabian and Persian horses. However, of much greater importance in monetary terms were the products of the sea. There were three sources of income connected with the sea – transit trade, fishing and pearling. The inhabitants of the Gulf who lived on the coasts could derive income in several ways from transit trade, especially from Indian goods. Hormuz is an outstanding example. The port established a kingdom from this, the main source of its wealth, from the beginning of the fourteenth century. Hormuz was engaged in many wars in the Gulf and on the coast of Oman as a result of the attempts of certain rulers to force shipping to pass by its harbours and to pay customs there, avoiding the harbours of its opponents in that area.

1. Organisation of the Study

This thesis is divided into an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. The remainder of the introduction will provide a summary of the primary Portuguese sources, and other English, Arabic, and Turkish sources which pertain to the Portuguese

⁵ For important discussions of connections between Antwerp and Portugal see: P. Musgrave, *The Early Modern European Economy* (London, 1999), chapter 7; R. Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (London, 1973); C. Verlinden, 'From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Aspects of an economic shift', *Journal of European Economic History*, 1 (1972), pp. 625-46; R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, 1990); I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (London, 1971-80), 2 vols; K. Maxwell, 'Portugal, Europe, and the origins of the Atlantic commercial system, 1415-1520', *Portuguese Studies*, 8 (1992), pp. 3-16.

occupation of the Gulf. There then follows a short description of the Gulf's geography to orientate readers unfamiliar with the region.

Chapter One is devoted to Portuguese expansion in the East, starting with the historical background from the early foundation of the kingdom and the objectives of the Portuguese discoveries. In addition, the chapter discusses commercial contacts between India and the Gulf before the Portuguese arrived. Particular attention is paid to the political and social structure of Hormuz and the relationships between the kingdom and its neighbours in the Gulf, particularly with Kirmān on the Persian mainland. The rise to power of Hormuz during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is analysed. By the early years of the sixteenth century, Hormuz had become one of the most important commercial, political and intellectual centres of the East.

Chapter Two deals with the economic life and seaborne trade of the Gulf during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This chapter examines the commercial experience and influences that the Portuguese brought to the people of the Gulf during their domination and the economic aspects of the regime, especially its interest in the *alfândega* (or 'customs house'). There is also a discussion of the *cartaz* system, the famous licences issued by the Portuguese authorities to non-Portuguese shipping. This chapter will attempt to find clear answers to a number of more specific questions. For example, did the Portuguese establish new routes and markets and introduce new products into the trade network of the Gulf? Did they have the experience to raise taxes efficiently in support of their presence in the region? Did they increase the value of internal trade between the Gulf ports? How did they treat other foreign powers in the Gulf?

Chapter Three discusses the structure and effectiveness of Portuguese political administration in the East in general and in the Gulf in particular, with some comparative analysis between Goa and Hormuz: the Portuguese established a hierarchy

where Lisbon issued orders to the viceroy at Goa, and Goa controlled all the far-flung outposts in the East. Consideration is given to relations between the Portuguese and the local governors and the Arab tribes, who suffered from the Portuguese and Turks alike. It will be seen that the Portuguese found it difficult to build a power base in the Gulf, as they were unable to subvert the hereditary rule established by the Hormuzians in the thirteenth century, long before their arrival. Some aspects of the situation, however, are still unclear: more research needs to be carried out on the impact of the Portuguese on the kings of Hormuz, and the political system that the Portuguese adopted from Hormuz to rule the Gulf, as well as the real reasons for the decay of Portuguese policy there.

Chapter Four analyses the reactions of the inhabitants to the Portuguese and local resistance against them in the Gulf, including an evaluation of the effects of this resistance on Portuguese control in the first three decades of the sixteenth century. Here we will deal, as well, with the arrival of the Ottomans in the Gulf after Basra came under their control in 1546. From there, the Ottoman navy struggled to extend its influence, which predictably brought the Turks into conflict with the Portuguese. The chapter also discusses political relations with Persia during the reign of Shah Abbas, and the problems of the Portuguese in the Gulf caused by the *alfândega* in Hormuz and Bahrain which led to war between the two powers.

Finally, Chapter Five concentrates on the decline of Portuguese control of the Gulf and its effects on the region. It is not intended to discuss in depth the early histories of the European India Companies in the East, because they are well-known. Rather, the focus will be on the relationship between 'profit' and 'power' in European conflicts to control the maritime routes, especially in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf. This chapter also examines the end of Portugal's domination in the Gulf, and the reasons for this. Was the decline of Portuguese power related to its structural, political, economic and ideological weaknesses, and in what measure? Why did the royal-public

sector of Portugal fail to administer the Gulf efficiently, while the English private sector, in the form of the East India Company, was successful? Did local resistance in the Gulf bring about the end of Portuguese supremacy? More specifically, why did the inhabitants of Hormuz not join with their king and the Portuguese in defending their island? These are some of the questions to be addressed in the chapter.

2. Review of Sources

A satisfactory historical approach has not yet been established in either Portugal or the Gulf states⁶ regarding the reality of Portugal's role in the Gulf. Conferences held about the Portuguese in the Gulf region,⁷ some of which I have attended, have gone no further than repeat what we know about Portuguese conquests in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, and the objectives of the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Over the last twenty years, a few studies have been published in Portugal about the Gulf, such as the work of António Dias Farinha.⁸ He provides useful details concerning the Portuguese presence there during the first half of the sixteenth century. Farinha rightly notes the difficulties and vast scope of the subject, in view of Portugal's extensive networks of commercial interchange, regional and international trade. An article by Maria Cruz relates to the Portuguese-Ottoman struggle in Basra between 1557 and 1568,⁹ and the information quoted from reports written by the Portuguese governors in India. It is an important study, but it is focused on Portuguese-Ottoman diplomacy more than anything else. As another example, Jean Aubin and his study group have revealed through their *Mare-Luso Indicum* a wealth of Portuguese and other sources

⁶ The Gulf group (GCC), established in 1981, contains six Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Emirates and Kuwait.

⁷ Conferences were held at Oman in 1980 (*Nadwet AL-derasat Al Omaniah*), at Bahrain in 1983 (*Muâtamar Tarekh Al-Bahrain*), and at Ras Al-khaimah (U.A.E.) in 1987 (*'Nadwet Ras Al-khaimah Al- Tarekheiah'*). None of them produced any really significant contributions.

⁸ A. D. Farinha, *Os Portugueses no Golfo Pérsico, 1507-1538* (Lisbon, 1991).

⁹ M. Cruz, 'A < Questão de Baçorá > na menoridade de D. Sebastião (1557-1568)', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras*, University of Lisbon, 6 (1986) pp.49-64.

relating to the Indian Ocean.¹⁰ Aubin himself wrote a valuable study of the kingdom of Hormuz, drawing on Portuguese, Arabic and Persian documents. His work is still the best on the subject. Although he did not cover the whole period up to the fall of Hormuz, there is important material about its economic and political activities before and after the Portuguese arrival.

This handful of region-specific studies must be also used in conjunction with a huge literature on Portuguese and European overseas expansion more generally. Works by the late C.R. Boxer need little introduction,¹¹ but his impressive lifetime of scholarship is only part of an incredibly rich tradition of writing about the first European overseas empires. Some of these works, though dealing with different regions of the globe or even different sets of protagonists, provide helpful reference points for understanding Portuguese activities in the Gulf. This is especially so in the light of the experiences of other parts of the *Estado da India*. Notable contributors in this field include Niels Streensgaard and Sanjay Subrahmanyam.¹² Both authors concentrate on the conflict between the Portuguese and the other European powers at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and on the general economic activities of the Portuguese in the East, with an emphasis on India.

Given the paucity of directly relevant scholarship on the Gulf, much depends on the use and interpretation of a vast array of primary sources, both printed and manuscript, narrative and administrative. It should be noted at this point that most of the Portuguese documents have not been translated into English or Arabic, and many of them are still unpublished. There was also difficulty in locating certain sources, because some documents brought from India to Lisbon during the period in question were lost,

¹⁰ J. Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz Au Début du XVI^e Siècle,' *Mare Luso-Indicum* vol. II, (Geneva, 1973), pp. 74-187. See also his work 'La Politique Iranienne d'Ormuz (1515-1540)', *Studia*, no. 53, (Lisbon, 1994), pp. 27-51.

¹¹ See E. Van Veen, *Decay or Defeat?* (Leiden, 2000).

¹² N. Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies* (Copenhagen, 1973); S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500- 1700: A Political and Economic History* (New York, 1993).

whether at sea or in fighting with other Europeans. For example, in 1592 when English vessels captured a Portuguese carrack, they found in its cargo ‘the notable register of the whole government and trade of the Portuguese in the East’,¹³ but we do not know what happened to it later.¹⁴

Many Portuguese documents relate to economic matters in India and the East. However, not all of these sources concern the Gulf, and those that do present a picture skewed towards one aspect of the Gulf’s economy, namely external trade. Of the remainder, we have only a few unclear indications. Nothing is known about the general state of the economy of the Gulf in the Portuguese period. Data for the period 1521-1622 are very fragmentary, inevitably so because of the scanty materials now available in manuscripts or in published works about Portuguese activities in the Gulf.

In spite of these problems, extant Portuguese sources are very valuable for reconstructing the general history of the Gulf. However, there is a serious shortage of Arabic and Persian sources on the economy and politics of the region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, it is unclear why Arab and Persian chronicles were silent when the Portuguese arrived in the Gulf from the south of Oman. We may wonder why the Omani chroniclers immersed themselves in arguments about secondary local events while Albuquerque’s fleet was bombarding the towns on the shores of their country. In fact, the Omani chronicles (including *Kashf Al-Ghummha Al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-Ummha*, written by Sarhan bin Saeed Al-azkwi; *Tuhfat al-’a’yān Bi-Sirat ’Ahl ’Umān* by Abdullah bin Hameed Al-Salmi; and *Al Fat’h al Mubeen Li-Seerat Al Sadah Al-Busaeediyeen* of Hameed bin Muhammad bin Razeeq) do not disclose anything about the Portuguese and the Ottomans in the Gulf. Yet they do provide valuable material on the legends of the Omani Ibadhi Imāms of the Al-Yarubi dynasty

¹³ G. Birdwood, *Report on the Old Records of the India Office* (London, 1890), p. 198.

¹⁴ Portuguese archives present several challenges. They are poorly catalogued and, in the case of Lisbon, were damaged by the earthquake of 1755. Working in them induces a feeling of being involved in a treasure hunt.

in the seventeenth century, giving much information about Imám Nasir bin Murshid Al-Yarubi and the end of the Portuguese presence in Oman in 1649. There are also many contemporary books dealing with the history of Yemen written by Hadrami historians, who describe in detail the military efforts of the Portuguese to enter the Red Sea and to capture the port of Aden.¹⁵

One may suggest several reasons why the Omani writers ignored the Portuguese. Perhaps those who were engaged in the discussion of seemingly parochial events were the Ibadhis who ruled internal territories of Oman rather than the coast. Most of the towns on the Omani coast were subject to the king of Hormuz rather than the Ibadhi. In addition, the people of Oman, as Al-Salmi points out, do not care to record historical events for their own sake, but mention them in the context of the biographies of the Imáms and discussion of religious issues.¹⁶ Moreover, the Omani writers may have felt that the Portuguese invasion and consequent domination of their ports was humiliating, and hence deliberately avoided recording these events. They were proud of themselves and the glory of their culture and historical legacy as the masters of the Islamic world, and did not wish to tarnish this image by showing that they had been defeated by the Portuguese. In this context, it is noticeable that Omani chronicles are noticeably more forthcoming about the schemes of the Imáms to drive the Portuguese out of Oman in the second quarter of the seventeenth century.¹⁷

In the absence of indigenous sources, this work will mainly deal with foreign source material, particularly Portuguese documents, which obviously are crucial to understanding their invasion and domination of the Gulf. For this purpose I spent around eight months in Portugal in 2001-2. After returning to the Gulf I also visited a

¹⁵ I discuss these materials in my first published work about Portuguese attempts to invade the Gulf and the southern Arabian Peninsula in the period 1507-25. M. Al-Salman, *Al Gazw Al Purtukali Le 'Al Janub Al-Arabie wa Al-khalej fi Alfatrah ma baen 1507-1525*(Al-Ain, 2000), pp. 337-38.

¹⁶ A. H. Al-Salmi, *Tuhfat al-'A'yān Bi-Sirat 'Ahl 'Umān* (Muscat, 1995), vol. I, p. 353.

¹⁷ For these events, see S. S. Al-azkwi, *Kashf Al-Ghummha Al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-ummha*, ed. Abdul-Majid Al-Qaisi (Muscat, 1980); Al-Salmi, *Tuhfat al-'a'yān Bi-Sirat 'Ahl 'Umān*.

number of historical centres in Iran, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, searching for any sources or information relating to the Portuguese in the Gulf during the sixteenth century.

The most useful contemporary eyewitness sources from the discovery period are in the Portuguese archives, especially the oldest and the most important of the Portuguese collections, the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), which was established in Lisbon in 1378.¹⁸ However, from thousands of documents in the collection, only a small number relate to the sixteenth century, and there is no catalogue guide for the Gulf or the Arabian Sea, such as is provided for Brazil, Angola, Timor, China and India.

The ANTT has three main groups of relevant material. The first and largest, the Corpo Cronológico (CC), contains 82,902 documents kept in Maços or bundles. Most of the materials in CC relate to the sixteenth century. However, the problems with these materials are that they are not original and most of them are not clear enough to read because they were written by hand and the copies are poor. The second group of material is the As Gavetas or 'drawers'. There are twenty-three Gavetas, published by the Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos of Lisbon. This group contains some documents referring to the Gulf, Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, including some correspondence. For example, in Volume I there is a letter from Bernardim de Sousa to João III about an expected Turkish attack against Hormuz, dated 20 November 1545, sent from Goa to Lisbon.¹⁹ A second example is part of a long letter in Volume X, sent by Cristóvão de Mendonça, the captain of Hormuz fortress (1528-30), to João III about hostilities in India and the Portuguese fortresses. This letter is dated 18 November 1529, and was sent from

¹⁸ *Guia Geral dos Fundos da Torre do Tombo*, ed. Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais / Torre do Tombo (Lisbon, 1998), p. xxi.

¹⁹ ANTT, *A. G.*, vol. I, Gav. ii, 10-17. Carta de Bernardim de Sousa a D. João III a respeito dos turcos e da guerra de Ormuz, Goa, 1545, Novembro, 20. pp. 915-18. See Appendix II, Doc. 3.

Hormuz.²⁰ The part which was used in this study was the second event in that *carta*, without title,²¹ which concerns the Portuguese campaign against Bahrain in 1529.²² A third letter, in Volume IV, from Reis Rukn Al-Din, the vizier of Hormuz, to Reis Sharaf Al-Din, the exiled former vizier, deals with relations between Maneng Bin Rashid, the king of Al-Hasa, and Reis Mohammed, the governor of Bahrain.²³

At the ANTT there are also original documents which are still unpublished, stored in a small handbook entitled 'Cartas dos Vice-Reis da Índia'. There are hundreds of these letters. One of them which was used in this study is very important, as it is from the vizier of Hormuz to the Turks, requesting their assistance to protect Hormuz.²⁴

The third significant collection of the ANTT is 'Livros Das Moncoes ou Documentos Remetidos do Índia' (The 'Monsoon Books' or 'Codices'). It contains sixty-two codices. It is also the title of the chief collection still at the Goa Archives, comprising some 240 volumes.²⁵ The documents cover the period 1605 to 1650 and have been printed, originally under the direction of Raymundo António de Bulhão Pato. He arranged the documents in chronological order. After the editor died in 1912, the fifth volume, with documents from Books 11-12, was delayed until 1935.²⁶ The Lisbon

²⁰ ANTT, *A. G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, 2. Carta de Cristóvão de Mendonça a el-rei D. João III, na qual lhe conta os acontecimentos e inimizades da Índia e o Estado da fortaleza. Ormuz, 1529, Novembro, 18. pp. 254-58. See Appendix II, Doc. 1.

²¹ Ahmed Bushrab, the Moroccan scholar, put a title to this part of the Portuguese letter in his attempt to translate it into Arabic. He entitled it 'The Portuguese campaign against Bahrain from a letter to the governor of Hormuz in 1529'. See A. Bushrab, 'Musahamat Al-Masadir wa Al-Wathaiq Al-Burtukāliyyah fi Kitabat Tarekh Al-Bahrain Khilal Al-Nisf Al-Awwal Mian Al-Qarn Al-Sades Ashar', *Al-Watheeka*, 4, (Bahrain, 1984), pp. 128-32.

²² See Chapter Four, below.

²³ ANTT, *A. G.*, vol. IV, Gav. xv, 11-2. Carta de Rei Rocam Adim, alguazil de Ormuz, para Rei Xarafo, na qual lhe narra o que se passava entre Maneng Bem Rasid, rei de Laçã, e Rei Mamed, governador de Barém. (1545), pp. 357-59. This letter was written in Arabic and after the Portuguese officials discovered it they translated it for their king. See Appendix II, Doc. 2.

²⁴ ANTT, *Cartas dos Vice-Reis da Índia*, no. 82. The original letter was written in Arabic and translated into the Portuguese.

²⁵ A. S. Rego, 'The Monsoon Codices at the National Archives of the Torre do Tombo', *Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems*, ed. John Correia-Afonso (London, 1981), p. 51.

²⁶ Rego, 'The Monsoon Codices at the National Archives of the Torre do Tombo', p. 53.

Academy of Science decided to continue this work. António da Silva Rego was editor of the last five volumes from VI to X. Altogether, ten volumes have been published.

The ANTT also has several smaller collections of documents which are important for the events of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula. One of them is 'Cartas de Ormuz a Dom João de Castro' – the letters from Hormuz to João de Castro, who was viceroy of India in the period 1545-48.²⁷ Recently, two Portuguese historians have published a selection of these letters.²⁸ They contain some important information about the Ottoman occupation of Basra and relations between Hormuz and Basra during that time.

In addition to all these manuscript administrative sources, there is also a rich chronicle literature that relates, often in detail, the achievements of the Portuguese in Asia and Africa. All of these works were written during the so-called *Idade de Ouro* or 'Golden Age' of Portugal in the sixteenth century. The principal chroniclers are Barros, Couto, Castanheda, Correia, and Bocarro, who each held the position of 'Keeper of Records'. Some of these historians were relatives of the royal household or under royal patronage and direction in both Portugal and Spain.

The work of João de Barros, the first distinguished chronicler,²⁹ covers events from the voyage of Vasco Da Gama to India in 1497 until the Ottoman siege of Diu in 1538.³⁰ It is worth noting that Barros was the only major historian of the empire not to visit India: he served (c.1533 to 1567) as a factor of the *Casa da Índia* at Lisbon.³¹ To enable him to write his history of the Portuguese discoveries, Barros was given all the

²⁷ *Guia Geral dos Fundos da Torre do Tombo*, p. 95. These letters are still in the microfilm store under the number AN/TT/0925 (*Cota: Cartas Missivas no: 10. C.f. 36*).

²⁸ L. Albuquerque, *Cartas de D. João III* (Lisbon, 1989); D. F. Castro, *Crônica do Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, (Lisbon, 1995).

²⁹ C. R. Boxer, 'Three Historians of Portuguese Asia – Barros, Couto and Bocarro', *Boletim do Instituto Portugueses de Honkong* (Macau, 1948), vol. I, p. 6.

³⁰ J. Barros *Ásia*, ed. Hernani Cidade, (Lisbon, 1945, 46, 74), p. viii.

³¹ A. B. Coelho, 'João de Barros, feitor da Casa da Índia e Historiador da Ásia (1496-1507)', *Sumário da Licão-síntese para as Provas de Agregação em História na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1990).

papers necessary – royal instructions, the letters of viceroys and proceedings of judicial inquiries. In addition, he collected books, maps, and manuscripts from all over Asia.³² Barros also notes that he made use of two Arabic and three Persian geographers' works, which officials in the service of the king and a slave translated for him.³³

The second *Década* of Barros is particularly useful because it deals with events from 1506 to 1515, which was the main period of the establishment of the Portuguese empire in the East.³⁴ The most important *Livro* of the second *Década* is the second, which largely deals with Hormuz island – which was called Gerū or Gurun – and its conquest by Albuquerque in 1507-8. Barros also provides a valuable description and history of Hormuz and some other islands in the Gulf.³⁵ Also useful is the tenth book, which deals with the final conquest of Hormuz by Albuquerque in 1515 and his death on 16 December of the same year.

In chapter four of book VI in *Década* III, which covers the period 1516-25, Barros includes a short description of the Gulf region, with a particular focus on Bahrain, its pearl fishery, and Portugal's capture of the island in 1521.³⁶ In addition, book VII of the same *Década* is mainly about Portuguese activities in Hormuz and the surrounding region, especially the revolution of 1521 following King Manuel's order to bring the customs of Hormuz under direct Portuguese authority. The fourth *Década* was published in 1615 after Barros's death. In book III of this volume we are provided with information about the seventh governor of India, Nuno da Cunha (1529-38), and a

³² J. B. Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. H. Philip, (London, 1961), p. 158.

³³ He observes: '...em os livros de nossa Geografia se vera tirada de Geografia dos proprios Arabios, e Parseas dos quaes nos temos cinco livros, dous em a lingua Arabia, e tres na Parsea'. Barros *Ásia, Déc*, III, Liv. 2, p. 39.

³⁴ See *Segunda Década*, ed. António Baião, (Lisbon, 1974).

³⁵ The French scholar, Jean Aubin refers to this *Década* in his discussion of the history of Hormuz. See Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz Au Début du XVI' Siècle, vol. II, pp. 74-187.

³⁶ See *Terceira Década*, ed. H. Cidade, (Lisbon, 1946).

number of very important events that occurred in Muscat, Hormuz, Basra and Bahrain in 1529.³⁷

Diogo do Couto (1542-1616)³⁸ continued the chronicle of João de Barros after Philip II appointed him as a court historian. Couto went to India in 1559 and remained there for over fifty years. For the first ten years he was in service as a soldier. He became the Keeper of the Records at Goa and made full use of them when he came to write his continuation of Barros's *Décadas*.³⁹ He also drew some of his information from other Portuguese officials and soldiers serving in India, and from Ottoman Turks who were left in Gujarat after Süleyman Pasha's unsuccessful attempt to capture Diu in 1538.⁴⁰

The work of Couto contains twelve *Décadas*, covering the period 1580-1600. He also ranged back to 1526, giving a fresh account of the period up to 1538. Briefly, his most important *Décadas* relating to the Gulf are I to IV, VII, and X. In addition, Couto wrote the *Dialogo do Soldado Prático*, which provides a pungent personal commentary upon the Portuguese administration in the East, and in particular in India.⁴¹

Two other Portuguese historians who mention affairs in the Muslim world around the India Ocean are Fernão Lopes de Castanheda and Gaspar Correia. Castanheda, who was in India for ten years,⁴² composed *História do Descrimentos e Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, a work encompassing the period 1497-1538. Unfortunately, his work was never finished. In the introduction to the first book, first published in 1552, Castanheda suggested that his work would continue up to the death

³⁷ See *Quarta Década*, ed. H. Cidade, (Lisbon, 1946), pp. ix-xix.

³⁸ For full details about his life and education by the Jesuits in Lisbon, see the introduction of D. Couto *Décadas*, ed. António Baião (Lisbon, 1947), vol. I, pp. ix-xiv.

³⁹ Couto, *Décadas*, pp. xiv-xxii.

⁴⁰ Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', pp. 156, 159.

⁴¹ G. D. Winius, *The Black Legend of Portuguese India* (New Delhi, 1985).

⁴² The year of his birth at Santarem in Portugal is unknown. See C. Wessels, *Lopes de Castanheda História do descobrimento e conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses (1552-1561)*, (The Hague, 1929), p. ix.

of João de Castro in 1548, and would consist of ten books. Nevertheless, after a lengthy search and many enquiries, I have found only eight books, published in four volumes. In the last volume, published in 1933, the eighth book was divided into 8 and 9, which means that part of the ninth book and all of the tenth have disappeared.⁴³ The most interesting sections of Castanheda's work are his accounts of people, their towns, produce, and trade, which are discussed in relation to the Gulf in books II, III, V, VII, and VIII.

The *Lendas da Índia* of Gaspar Correia (the dates of his birth and death are uncertain) added ten years to Castanheda's account by relating events in the East from 1497 to 1548.⁴⁴ Correia probably began to write his work during the governorship of Albuquerque, since he was his secretary, and travelled to India in this capacity in 1512.⁴⁵ Because of his position, Correia had access to letters and documents written by Portuguese officials, and for this reason his depiction of towns and fortresses is very useful, though he excludes general geographical surveys because others, like Duarte Barbosa, had already attempted them in their works. Correia was more interested in the mechanics of trade and the administration of Portuguese India.⁴⁶ He, like Couto, was also deeply disillusioned by the greed, despotism, selfishness and corruption of the Portuguese in the East. However, the work of Correia sometimes lacks accuracy.⁴⁷ Correia's work was printed for the first time in 1864.

⁴³ F. L. Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos e Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, ed. P. de Azevedo and P. M. Laranjo Coelho (Coimbra, 1924). Harrison mentioned that according to Couto the ninth and tenth books which carried his narrative onwards from 1538, were called in by João III in order to suppress the truth about the lost siege of Diu. Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', p. 163, n. 8.

⁴⁴ G. Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, ed. M. Lopes de Almeida (Porto, 1975), p. viii. For his life and education see the introduction of his book, pp. viii-xii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. vi-vii, xiii.

⁴⁶ Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', p. 167.

⁴⁷ G. Correia, *The Three Voyages of Vasco Da Gama and his Viceroyalty*, trans. H. E. J. Stanley (New York, 1869), p. v.

António Bocarro, the fifth of the official historians, was appointed as a Chronicler and Keeper of the Records at Goa in 1631 until his death around 1649. His *Década 13 da História da Índia*, was not published until 1876.⁴⁸ It covers the period in office of Jerónimo de Azevedo as viceroy of India (1612-17).⁴⁹ This means that there is a gap in the official Portuguese chronicles between 1600 and 1612. This may be, as Harrison suggests, because Bocarro expected Couto's final volume to extend to 1612.⁵⁰ In his *Década*, Bocarro describes the diplomatic situation in the Gulf, especially the arrival of the English and the activities of the Sherley brothers in Persia.⁵¹ In addition, Bocarro wrote *O Livro Das Plantas de Todas as Fortalezas, Cidades e Povoações do Estado da Índia Oriental*, but it only covers the period after 1632, when Philip III ordered the compilation of a full account of Portuguese fortresses in the Indian Ocean, triggered by the loss of Hormuz.⁵²

When we examine these chronicles as a group, we find unfortunately that important elements have been lost. Barros's works, for instance, apparently contained a full account of the produce and commerce of the East. The work of Couto suffered greatly from a series of thefts, losses, and disasters; indeed, in old age he was forced to rewrite most of his books, with a consequent loss of literary design and effect. Moreover, it may be doubted whether he was able to remember all the things he had originally written.⁵³ In addition, we should consider that none of the Portuguese chronicles show clear signs of having had access to any source on the first voyage, other

⁴⁸ A. Bocarro, *Década 13 da História da Índia* (Lisbon, 1876).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. V. See also Appendix I of this study, below.

⁵⁰ Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', p. 161.

⁵¹ Bocarro, *Década 13*, p. x..

⁵² António Bocarro, *O Livro Das Plantas de Todas as Fortalezas, Cidades e Povoações do Estado da Índia Oriental*, ed. P. B. Resende (Lisbon, 1992), p. 13.

⁵³ António Baião, *Documentos Ineditos sobre João de Barros* (Coimbra, 1917), p. 14.

than an anonymous text. Correia, in his description of da Gama's voyage, appears closest to the idea of the traveller-chronicler.⁵⁴

Of course, we should also be aware that the 'official' chronicles were written merely to accomplish the main objectives of the Portuguese crown and court. Even if the writers' own views sometimes emerge, their works collectively viewed history as a series of great victories and momentous events involving their Christian European heroes. They concentrated on the captains, their expeditions, fleets, warships, and sometimes Muslims with whom they dealt to their benefit, or who took action against the Portuguese authorities. In addition, though their writings are tinged more or less deeply by religious sentiment and the zeal of Portuguese activity, they are secular histories. They are extensions of the national chronicles. For example, João III sent orders to Nuno da Cunha, the governor of India, to write to him in detail about events in Asia, and then he gave these accounts to Barros.⁵⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to check carefully what they said, especially about Indians, and in the Gulf about Arabs, Turks, and Persians, and about the names of places and persons.

In addition to original documents in Portuguese, other important published sources have been used in this study. Firstly, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Da Albuquerque*, second viceroy of India (1509-15), translated and edited from the Portuguese edition of 1774 by Walter de Gray Birch.⁵⁶ These *Commentaries* were not written by Albuquerque in person, but compiled by his illegitimate son, Braz.⁵⁷ The important volumes of the *Commentaries* are the first (from 1503-8), which contains the principal account of the first Portuguese invasion and military operations on the Omani

⁵⁴ M. Kriegel and S. Subrahmanyam, 'The Unity of Opposites: Abraham Zacut, Vasco da Gama and the Chronicler Gaspar Correia' in *Vasco da Gama and the linking of Europe and Asia*, ed. A. Disney and E. Booth (Oxford, 2000), pp. 50-1, 54.

⁵⁵ Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', p. 157.

⁵⁶ The first edition of the *Commentaries* was in 1576 and the second in 1774.

⁵⁷ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, trans. and ed. W. de Gray Birch (London, 1875), vol. I, p. iii.

shore and against Hormuz itself; the second volume, which deals with events between 1508 and 1510; and the fourth volume, which relates events from the final two years of Albuquerque's tenure. Obviously these *Commentaries* contain an exaggerated panegyric of Portuguese deeds in the East. They describe sieges, battles and the slaughter of 'infidel enemies'. It is well-known that Albuquerque's treatment of the Omani coastal towns was savage. In spite of all this, the *Commentaries* contain valuable information about the Gulf, its residents, and the towns situated on the coast.

The Three Voyages of Vasco Da Gama and his Viceroyalty, part of Gaspar Correia's *Lendas da India*, has already been mentioned above.⁵⁸ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa* is a unique work from the first half of the sixteenth century, completed around 1514, because it contains a full description of the towns overlooking the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, on both the Persian and the Arab coasts. Moreover, Barbosa describes the course of the Portuguese invasion.⁵⁹ The narrative reflects the personal experience of the author in the East and contains many credible observations. The great importance of Barbosa's work is that it gives an intimate picture of each town in the Gulf at the beginning of sixteenth century. However, difficulties occur regarding the Old Portuguese place names, which need to be carefully compared with other geographical sources in Persian or Arabic.

In addition to these memoirs and commentaries, there are some important travelogues which are rich in information. The most important is *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*.⁶⁰ Teixeira was from a Portuguese-Jewish family in Lisbon, though nothing is known about his occupation while he was in the East. He travelled to India around

⁵⁸ G. Correia, *The Three Voyages of Vasco Da Gama and his Viceroyalty*, pp. i- lxxvii.

⁵⁹ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, trans. M. L. Dames, 2 vols. (London, 1967). In addition, there is another work of Barbosa entitled *A description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the sixteenth century*, translated from an early Spanish manuscript in the Barcelona Library, ed. H. E. J. Stanley (London, 1866).

⁶⁰ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, trans. W. F. Sinclair (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1967).

1586, just a few years after the Dutch traveller Jan Huyghen Linschoten arrived,⁶¹ and remained in the East until 1605. This was a crucial moment in the history of the Portuguese empire. Teixeira visited the Gulf twice, in 1587 and 1604, and in the latter year he also visited Basra.⁶² For present purposes, his short narrative of the origin of the kingdom of Hormuz is the most important part of his book, because he quotes from the original Persian text *Shahnamat*, which has since disappeared.⁶³

I have not yet alluded to the most important published Portuguese source dealing with the first decades of the seventeenth century, namely the *Commentaries of Ruy Freire de Andrada*, translated and edited by Boxer.⁶⁴ Their importance lies in Ruy Freire's appointment to a number of positions in the Portuguese fleet operating in the Gulf from 1619. He was blamed personally for the fall of Hormuz. Freire established his headquarters in Muscat after the fall of Hormuz and recovered Suhar, Duba and Khúr Fakhān on the Omani coast from the Persians. He also conducted a number of raids on the Arab coast of the Gulf.⁶⁵ Freire was known for his enthusiasm and his military acumen, but he was also noted for his cruelty and oppression. His violence in the Gulf spanned the period 1619-32 and permanently sullied his reputation. The *Commentaries* give us detailed information about Portuguese military operations in the Gulf in this time and, equally importantly, the attitude of the local powers towards the Portuguese.

⁶¹ This traveller's work also contains some important material about the Portuguese in the East during the last quarter of sixteenth century and their corruption. See *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, trans. A. C. Burnell, 2 vols. (London, 1885).

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. vii, xx-xxi.

⁶³ See Appendix A in *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 153-92.

⁶⁴ *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, ed. C. R. Boxer (London, 1929).

⁶⁵ N. Falsafi, *Zendaġané Shah `Abbās Awāl* (Tehran, 1371 S. D.), vol. 4, pp. 1561-2; J. Qāemmaqmāi, 'Qesmat as Ma'garaei Khalej Fārs', *YadġarMagazine*, 4 (1947), pp. 27-8.

Other important travelogues include *The Portuguese Asia* by Fariya y de Sousa and *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle*.⁶⁶ The former contains a detailed history of Portuguese influence in the Gulf, Indian Ocean, southern Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea. Sousa demonstrates the utter Portuguese bigotry towards the resident Muslims. Thus, he exaggerates Muslim casualties in the conflict against Portugal, and he describes Portuguese acts of savagery and terrorism as acts of bravery and heroism. His accounts, therefore, should be treated with a great deal of caution. The importance of the Italian Pietro Della Valle's travelogue is that he visited Persia in 1616-17 while Shah Abbas was fighting the Ottomans. Then, in 1621, he visited Shiraz and in the following years the Persian coast near Hormuz, at which point Hormuz was under siege by the English-Persian coalition. Della Valle remained in the Gulf until 1623. Therefore, his account of the political and military events in the region is extremely valuable and we can compare his comments with those of the Portuguese to see if the latter had a tendency to exaggerate the scale of their victories.

This thesis also draws on a number of contemporary Arabic sources. Among them is the famous navigation chronicle of Ibn Majid.⁶⁷ Important information about the Arab tribes who established a small kingdom and faced Hormuz on the west coast of the Gulf can be found in an Egyptian source entitled *Al-Daw' Al-lāmi' Li-Ahl Al-qarn Al-tāsi'* ('Spotlight on the people in the ninth century H. '), written by Shams Al-Din Mohammed bin Abdull Rahman bin Mohammed Al-Sakhāwi, (1427-97).⁶⁸ He visited

⁶⁶ M. F. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, trans. J. Stevens, 3 vols. (London, 1695); *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, ed. E. Grey, 2 vols. (London, 1892).

⁶⁷ S. A. Ibn Majid, *Kitāb Āl-Fawā'id fi Usūl ilm Āl-bahr wa' Āl-qawā'id*, ed. E. Khūri (Ras Al-khaimah, 1989). It is perhaps worth noting that Ibn Majid was not the pilot who guided the first Portuguese fleet to India in 1498. See M. Al-Salman, 'Who guided Vasco da Gama to India?', unpublished seminar paper, University of Hull, 2001. Ibn Majid was a *mu'allim* (navigation teacher) sailing mainly in the Indian Ocean and, in particular, in the Red and Arabian Seas. Most of Ibn Majid's account depended on the 'stars', and *Āl-Fawā'id* is the key work to the study of Ibn Majid's art if not the whole science of Indian Ocean navigation. The works of Ibn Majid say little about the Portuguese, but his knowledge of navigation at the time of their arrival is very important. G. R. Tibbetts, *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese* (London, 1971), pp. 8-9.

⁶⁸ S. M. Al-Sakhāwi, *Al-Daw' Al-lāmi' Li-Ahl Al-qarn Al-tāsi'* (Cairo, 1355 H.), vol. I.

Mecca, Medina, and Syria, where he gathered material about the eastern Arabian Peninsula.⁶⁹ *Al-Daw' Al-lāmi'* is considered to be one of the most important works on the notable personalities of the period.

It is not only the Portuguese naval commanders such as Albuquerque and Ruy Freire who left behind accounts of their campaigns in the Gulf. Similar histories have also been handed down by Ottoman naval commanders, and among them is *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydī Ali Reis*.⁷⁰ This work contains an account of the battles of Seydī Ali Reis against the Portuguese fought to bring back the Turkish fleet from Basra to Suez in 1553, and his subsequent adventures. This is considered the greatest Turkish source, not only about the Ottoman-Portuguese conflict in the Gulf in the mid-sixteenth century, but also on the efforts of the Ottoman navy in eastern waters. Of no less importance is the *Tohfat Al-Kkbar Fi Asfar Al-Bahar* by Mustafa Bin Abdullah Haji Khalifa. This was translated into English by James Mitchell and published under a new title, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*.⁷¹ The importance of this work is that it throws light on Ottoman naval activities in the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and in the Gulf in the sixteenth century.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the surviving Omani sources abstain from mentioning the Portuguese, except for incidental references to them as 'oppressors'.⁷² They also refer to the occupation of Suhar by the Portuguese, for the second time, in 1616.⁷³ However, only during the reigns of Imam Nasir bin Murshid Al-Yarubi, from 1624, and Sultan bin Saif Al-Yarubi, from 1649, does significant information about the Portuguese in Oman begin to appear, in a period which saw

⁶⁹ Al-Sakhāwi, *Al-Daw' Al-lāmi' Li-Ahl Al-qarn Al-tāsi*, vol. VIII.

⁷⁰ *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydī Ali Reis*, trans. A. Vambéry (Lahore, 1975). For personal details about *Seydī Ali Reis* see Chapter Four, section 2.

⁷¹ M. Haji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, trans. James Mitchell (London, 1831).

⁷² Al-Salmi, *Tuhfat al-'A'yān Bi-Sirat 'Ahl 'Umān*, vol. I, p. 354.

⁷³ Al-Azkawi, *Kashf Al-Ghummha al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-ummha*, p. 92.

conflict between the Imams and the Portuguese until the latter's expulsion from Muscat in 1650. The Omani *Ketab Kashf Al-Ghummha al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-ummha*, deals with the ejection of the Portuguese from Muscat in 1649-50.⁷⁴ Most later Omani accounts are based on *Kashf Al-Ghummha*.

3. Historical-Geographical Background of Portugal

There is no doubt of the strength of the relationship between geography and historical development. In the case of Portugal, geography and the environment affected its development in important respects, as we shall see.⁷⁵

Until the eleventh century Portugal was part of the Islamic kingdom of Al-Andalus in the Iberian Peninsula. The original nucleus of Portugal was the area between the Minho and Douro on the western littoral of the Iberian Peninsula.⁷⁶ The geography of Portugal was essentially maritime. It was a small, impoverished and compact country with a land area of 34,216 square miles (88,684 sq.km.) and a population of around one and a half million in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.⁷⁷ The proportion of its coastline to its area is three times the European average. The Portuguese part of the Iberian Peninsula is about one-fifth of the whole. A rock-strewn waste separates Portugal from Spain.⁷⁸

The mountainous character of the interior and restricted agricultural economy pushed the great majority of the people to live on the coastal areas close to the ocean.⁷⁹ That gave the Portuguese, like all the Mediterranean and Atlantic peoples, long-standing experience of the sea. No part of Portugal is very far from the sea. The Portuguese are in

⁷⁴ Al-Azkawi, *Kashf Al-Ghummha al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-ummha*, p. 111.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Civilizations* (London, 2001).

⁷⁶ See Map I, below.

⁷⁷ A. H. O. Marques, *History of Portugal* (New York, 1972), vol. I, p.271.

⁷⁸ M. Oliveira, *História de Portugal*, p. 34; H.V. Livermore, *A New History of Portugal*, (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 1-2.

⁷⁹ D. Arnold, *The Age of Discovery* (London, 1994), p. 22.

particular an Atlantic, not a Mediterranean, people, and the most important frontier has therefore been the open boundary of the ocean.⁸⁰ Moreover, the pattern of winds and currents in the Atlantic shaped Portuguese ideas of departure and return for ships trading with the islands or searching the ocean for fish.⁸¹

However, the influence of the ocean is felt not only on the coast, but also pervades the western half of the country. The distribution of population, concentrated on the coast, not inland, was one of the most important factors in the political separation of Portugal from Spain.⁸² The birth of Portugal dates from 1139, when Afonso I Henriques for the first time confirmed the title King of Portugal.⁸³ The revolution of 1385 brought to power the new royal house of Avis: João I of Avis (1385-1433) was the dynasty's founder and also, arguably, the father of a generation of princes who became the main directors and organisers of Portuguese colonisation and maritime exploitation at the beginning of fifteenth century. However, some recent studies of Portuguese expansion also draw attention to the initiatives of King Dinis (1279-1325).⁸⁴ In 1317 he appointed a Genoese merchant and mariner as admiral of the Portuguese fleet.⁸⁵ Thus, if Portuguese influence grew after the capture of Ceuta in 1415, and its exploration of West Africa accelerated,⁸⁶ then its origins went back much further and were partly connected with the Genoese diaspora identified by Fernandez-Armesto.⁸⁷ Appropriately enough, given the pattern of Italian enterprise in the medieval Mediterranean, because of the comparatively limited population resources in Portugal and the Avis dynasty's

⁸⁰ S. Bradford, *Portugal* (London, 1973), pp. 9-10.

⁸¹ Arnold, *The Age of Discovery*, p. 22.

⁸² Bradford, *Portugal*, p. 21.

⁸³ *Historia da Expansão Portuguesa no Moundo*, ed. A. Baião (Lisbon, 1937), vol. I, p. 19; Oliveira, *História de Portugal*, pp. 43-7.

⁸⁴ J. B. Hattendorf, *Maritime History: the Age of Discovery* (Malabar, Florida, 1996), vol.1, pp. 53-4.

⁸⁵ Hattendorf, *Maritime History*, p. 54.

⁸⁶ Oliveira, *Historia de Portugal*, p. 165.

⁸⁷ F. Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* (Philadelphia, 1987), *passim*.

encouragement of commercial ventures the Portuguese ultimately created a commercial maritime empire that did not include a vast number of peoples, cities, and territories.⁸⁸

4. Geographical Background of the Gulf

Geography, especially the monsoon winds, has played a significant role in shaping the trade of the Gulf. This part of the introduction therefore summarises the nature of the coastal geography and the location of all the main trading centres in the Gulf which are referred to in this thesis.

The Gulf is an arm of the Indian Ocean lying between the Arabian Peninsula and Iran. It is almost an inland sea. The area of the Gulf is nearly 70,000 square miles. The Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman lie between 22° and 30° North latitude, and 48° and 62° East longitude. The Gulf is bounded on the south and south-west by the coastal districts of Arabian Peninsula, at the head of the Gulf by those of Iraq, and on the north-east by the coastal regions of south-west Persia.⁸⁹ The Gulf proper extends in a south-easterly direction for 460 miles from the mouth of Shatt Al-Arab to the coast of the promontory of Oman, with a width of about 180 miles from the eastern coast of Arabian Peninsula to the coast of Persia.

The Strait of Hormuz separates the Gulf to the west, and the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea to the east, with a length of about 104 miles and a width of only 29 miles.⁹⁰ The Strait is defined by a line drawn northward from Ras Al-Shaikh Masud on the western side of the Musandam Peninsula to Jazireht Hengam south of the Iranian coast, and in the Gulf of Oman by a line drawn from Ras Dabbah on the eastern side of the Musandam Peninsula to Damagheh-ye Kuh on the Iranian coast.⁹¹ The depths in the

⁸⁸ J. Cortesão, *O Império Português no Oriente* (Lisbon, 1968), pp. 31-48.

⁸⁹ Historical Section of the Foreign Office. *Persian Gulf: French and Portuguese Possessions*, vol. XIII (London, 1920), pp. 1-2.

⁹⁰ C. G. Constable and A. W. Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot* (London, 1908), p. 1.

⁹¹ See Map II, below.

Strait are greater on the Arabian side than the Iranian side.⁹² The Strait of Hormuz has long been, and still is, of great strategic importance as it is the only sea route through the Gulf into the west.⁹³ The head of the Gulf is formed, in the west, by the marshy alluvial estuaries of rivers, principally the Euphrates, Tigris and Karūn.⁹⁴

The Gulf of Oman is an arm of Arabian Sea which forms the approach to the Arabian Gulf proper. On the Persian side of the Gulf where the coast is mountainous, the water is naturally deeper than on the flatter Arabian side, where reefs and shoals extend into the Gulf for a distance of from 30 to 50 miles along almost its entire length.⁹⁵

The Arabian Gulf lacks good harbours, the anchorages being for the most part shallow, exposed and difficult for navigation. This was one disadvantage of the region, especially on the Arabian coast, for Portuguese ships when they entered the Gulf at the beginning of sixteenth century: they had to move slowly and cautiously in their attempts to find good harbours for their fleet, the notable exception being the port of Hormuz.⁹⁶

In addition to the points already mentioned above, there are many factors which make navigation along the Persian coast faster and safer than the Arabian coast. The Persian coast is shorter, with fewer capes and indentations. Close to the Persian shore, however, the seabed has a muddy bottom, making it very difficult for an anchor to hold. Along every part of the Persian coast, ships could find anchorages in the different bays, or in the islands lying offshore which gave shelter from storms. Moreover, along the Persian coast there were many towns and villages where water and wood could be obtained. On the other side, the Arabian coast from Shat Al-Arab North to Ras

⁹² Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 2.

⁹³ R. B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast* (Oxford, 1963), p. 34.

⁹⁴ R. K. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz* (Holland, 1979), pp. 1-2.

⁹⁵ C. Belgrave, *The Pirate Coast* (Beirut, 1972), p. 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Musandam is mostly a white sand desert.⁹⁷ For these reasons and others, the Portuguese navy was attracted to the Persian coast more than to the Arabian coast.

On the Arabian Peninsula, the Province of Al-Hasa runs along the Gulf coast for 300 miles. Qatif and its oasis are situated on the coast north-east of the oasis of Al-Hasa. Its length from north to south is 18 miles, with an average breadth of 3 miles.⁹⁸ The coastline of the Gulf proper as far as the foot of the promontory of Oman is dotted with a number of bays. This part of the coast is low and reefs and shoals extend from 30 to 50 miles offshore, making it difficult and dangerous to approach. In the period of this study, only the island of Bahrain had good harbours in this region. This forms the centre of the archipelago that constitutes the principality of Bahrain.⁹⁹

Because of its important location, the Gulf has one of the longest histories of navigation. It is mentioned in the history of ancient Dilmun settlements in the Bahrain Islands as a trading centre as early as the third millennium.¹⁰⁰ In the subsequent period, ports grew up on the Gulf coast, chiefly with the development of Indian, African and Chinese contacts.

Thus, the importance of the Gulf lies principally in its relation to international communications. The head of the Gulf gave the best natural outlet to the shortest route from central and southern Europe to India.¹⁰¹ All trade coming from centres in the Indian Ocean and Persia passed through the Gulf, especially via Hormuz. Thereafter, camel caravans carried goods overland via Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, or through

⁹⁷ Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Historical Section of the Foreign Office, *Persian Gulf*, p. 6.

⁹⁹ Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ A. K. Al-Kalifa, and A. Al-Hamar, *Al-Bahrain Abr Al-Tareakh* (Bahrain, 1972), vol. 1, p. 28; Belgrave, *The Pirate Coast*, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Historical Section of the Foreign Office. *Persian Gulf*, p.4.

Iraq by river and land routes to Aleppo, the principal city of Syria, and from there to the Mediterranean or to the ports of the Black Sea.¹⁰²

In the fifteenth century, seaborne trade from India up the Gulf to Basra and along the Red Sea to Suez was chiefly in the hands of the Hormuzian, Omani and Yemeni Arabs, who had kept this profitable intercourse in their own hands for centuries. They held a position somewhat similar to that previously held by the Venetians in Europe. For European nations, the journey from Europe across Asia by land was long and dangerous.

There are no statistics for the total population in the Gulf at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It can be suggested that the Arabs were probably most numerous on both the Arabian and Persian shores. On the other hand, very small numbers of Persians could be found in some ports of the Arabian coast, such as Bahrain and along the Omani shore, principally in the port belonging to the kingdom of Hormuz.¹⁰³

Climate and wind systems place the Arabian Gulf proper, as well as the western parts of the Gulf of Oman, at the outer rim of the monsoon regime that dominates the Arabian Sea. The whole of the Gulf area is situated in a very hot and dry region of the earth. Geographically, the Gulf lies almost outside the region of the south-west monsoon, and its effect on the climate is for the most part indirect.¹⁰⁴ The highest temperatures in the Gulf rise to a range of 52° C, and the lowest reach 15° C. From the middle of July to the middle of August, the heat is very oppressive, owing to the stillness of the winds and the heavy humidity, so the weather is hot and tiring. One should remember that the

¹⁰² S. Al-Askare, *Al-Tejarat wa Al-Melaha fi Al-Khalij Al-'Arabi* (Cairo, 1972), p.7.

¹⁰³ Such as Qalhāt, Quriyat, Suhar, Khūr Fakhān and the main city of Muscat. There is a settlement near Ras Musandam called Kumazar, whose inhabitants, called Al-Shihuh, long preserved an original dialect, a compound of Arabic and a vernacular Farsī. Some Omanis who I met mentioned that the Al-Shihuh tribes know Portuguese as well. For more details about Kumazar and Al-Shihuh see *Travels in Oman*, ed. P. Ward (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 454-69.

¹⁰⁴ R. Klein, *Trade in the Safavid port city Bandar Abbas and the Persian Gulf Area*, PhD thesis, University of London (London, 1994), p. 27.

Portuguese launched their invasion on Bahrain in 1521 in these extreme summer conditions. Consequently, they suffered many navigational problems. In this campaign, the Portuguese commander lost about 150 of his men in the Gulf before reaching his target, and his soldiers were in a state of exhaustion during the battle on the island.¹⁰⁵

Because of the Gulf's modest size and the knowledge of the wind regime by the inhabitants, local trade flourished in small vessels. However, navigation of the Gulf in a sailing ship needs great care. As in most inland waters, the winds are very uncertain, and blow occasionally with great force down the Gulf. These winds set in without much warning. In the Arabian Sea at the mouth of the Gulf the wind pattern divided the year into two halves.¹⁰⁶ The north-east monsoon allowed voyages from east to west in winter, from October to March, while the south-west monsoon permitted travel in the opposite direction in summer, except for the period between June and August when making port in India was rendered impossible due to the strong winds.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, for eight months of the year there is no rain. In winter, however, the rainfall on the Arabian coast reaches nearly 10 cm, while the Persian coast with its higher relief receives up to 20 cm.¹⁰⁸

These basic facts of temperature and winds are important to take on board because they affected every aspect of life and commerce in the Gulf region. The winds, in particular, were a factor of great importance in the Gulf: the wind, by turns, could either facilitate the passage of seaborne trade or cause losses of both men and ships. The local winds of the Gulf, including the sea and air currents all along its coast, flow from the land to the sea during the night and turn onshore again during the day. Significant local winds can be divided into three kinds. The *shamál* is a north-westerly that blows

¹⁰⁵ M. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, pp. 257-8.

¹⁰⁶ Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 5. See Plate VII, below.

¹⁰⁷ Klein, *Trade in the Safavid port city Bandar Abbas*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁸ S. M. Al-Qasimi, *Power Struggles and Trade in the Gulf 1620-1820* (Exeter, 1999), p. 8.

down the Gulf to the Persian coast in winter, especially towards Hormuz, bringing clouds and rain. In the northern half of the Gulf the *shamál* blows about nine months each year. This makes navigation very dangerous because it may set in at any time of the day or night, and very suddenly. Given the importance of local knowledge, the Portuguese and the Turks had to use local pilots on their ships.¹⁰⁹ The *Kaus*, a south-easterly wind, is similar in effect to the *shamál* in that it blows from the east with great force from December to April, with hard squalls and often much rain. The *Suhailí* brings dust storms as it erupts from the south-west in winter, also bringing rain and clouds rising from the south. It blows all over the Arabian Gulf and also in the Gulf of Oman, and can cause significant damage.¹¹⁰

In addition to the winds, the currents in the Gulf also have many effects on navigation. At the entrance to the Gulf the prevailing currents run inwards from May to September, and outwards during the rest of the year. Within the Gulf itself, between the entrance and the Shatt Al-Arab, the current sets down the middle of the Gulf. It is often very weak and, at times, may set towards the north.¹¹¹ This does not necessarily mean that sailing to and from the Gulf is very difficult, but it needs specific navigational experience.

There are several islands of various sizes strewn along the Gulf, just a few miles from the coast. However, in this work I will focus on those that were of importance at the time of the Portuguese invasion.

Across the Strait of Hormuz at the northern tip of Oman, stands an island of circular shape like a gate-post, or a key of the Gulf. This is the tiny island of Hormuz or

¹⁰⁹ The most experienced pilots in the Gulf were those from Muscat, Julfar, Bahrain, Lingah, Rayshahr, Shatt Al-Arab. See Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, pp. 5-7.

¹¹¹ Al-Qasimi, *Power Struggles and Trade in the Gulf 1620-1820*, p. 22; Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 15.

Jarūn which lies at latitude 27° North, about 10 miles from the Persian mainland and about 34 miles from the Arabian coast.¹¹² It is about six miles in length and three miles in width. The island of Hormuz is of old volcanic rock, with a range of hills running east to west from sea to sea.¹¹³ The island is mostly occupied by salt hills about 300 feet in height.¹¹⁴ It is covered in cliffs and rocks, and is altogether barren.¹¹⁵ Hormuz has two good natural harbours, one on the east side, and the other on the west. It was at that point that the Portuguese chose to build their great fort in the Gulf.

Hormuz occupied a position which was in many respects comparable with Aden. The population at the beginning of the sixteenth century was about 40,000.¹¹⁶ The island of Hormuz was a kingdom which had controlled the Gulf for 200 years before the arrival of the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹¹⁷ The importance of this kingdom lay mainly in the geographical position of Hormuz island at the mouth of the Gulf, which gave it complete control of trade coming in from the Indian Ocean to the ports in the Gulf, and the link with the land routes around the region.

The islands of Bahrain, of which there are over thirty, lie in an archipelago with an area of 706 square km. It looks like a 'chessboard' floating on the Gulf. The longest of these islands is Bahrain itself, or Awal. It is 30 miles in length from north to south, and merely 10 miles in breadth.¹¹⁸ Its shores are low; and along the northern shore there is a green belt of well-watered land two to three miles wide, covered with date groves and other agriculture. The important city on the island, Manamah, is in the north-east. It

¹¹² A. Tenreiro and M. Afonso, *Viagens por Terra da Índia a Portugal* (Lisbon, 1991), p. 23.

¹¹³ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 164-65.

¹¹⁴ See Plate IV.

¹¹⁵ Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 2; *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, vol. I, p. 47; *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. B. Lewis et al, New ed. (Leiden and London, 1971-76), vol. III, p. 585.

¹¹⁶ G. Schweizer, 'Bandar 'Abbās und Hormoz', *Beihefte Zum Tübinger Atlas Des Vorderen Orients*, no. 2. (Wiesbaden, 1972), p.12; Barros states that in 1515 there were about 30,000 people in the city of Hormuz. *Ásia, Década II*, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter One, below.

¹¹⁸ M. Barrault, *Regards Bahrain*, trans. A. Sarda (Paris, 1996), p. 6.

was mentioned as an important trade centre in the fifteenth century.¹¹⁹ Water at most points on the island was plentiful at the time when the Portuguese arrived, and, as a result, the north-east and the west were characterised by green fields with a good number of cattle.¹²⁰ From Ras Al-Ruman in the north to the shore of Bar Bar village in the west, there is a slight bay, near which the first battle between the inhabitants and the Portuguese occurred in 1521, and there the Portuguese erected their fort in Bahrain on the foundations of the Islamic fortress. From Bahrain extended a sea route to the interior of the Arabian Peninsula, via the minor ports of the Peninsula coast, notably Okwair (Ojair) and Qatif.¹²¹ From these ports there were caravan routes to Hofuf, the principal town of Al-Hasa oasis, and then across Nejd to Al-Hejaz province.¹²² However, bandits from the desert tribes sometimes jeopardized this land route. The distance between Hormuz and Bahrain was about four or five days' sailing with favourable winds.¹²³ Moreover, Bahrain was an important point on the sea route between Hormuz and Basra, and the bridgehead of the trade route between Hormuz and Hejaz on the Red Sea coast.

Bahrain was also the centre of the pearl fishery in the Gulf. For this reason, however, the island often attracted the attention of its strongest neighbours, especially Hormuz, for at the beginning of the sixteenth century the most important element of commerce in the eastern world was pearl fishing.¹²⁴

The main pearl fishery in the Gulf stretched from Ras Musandam to the island of Bahrain and Qatif, and also included several islands on the Persian side of the Gulf,

¹¹⁹ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 188.

¹²⁰ Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, pp. 93-5.

¹²¹ The port of Okwair is situated on the coast of the Arabian Peninsula about 24 miles south-west of the southern extremity of the Bahrain islands. Historical Section of the Foreign Office. *Persian Gulf*, p. 8.

¹²² Historical Section of the Foreign Office. *Persian Gulf*, p. 8.

¹²³ T. Pires, *The Suma Oriental* (London, 1944), vol. I, p. 19.

¹²⁴ N. Khesro, *Safar Namāh*, trans. Y. Al-Khashab, (Cairo, n.d.), p. 144; D. Potache, 'The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century', *Studia*, no. 48 (Lisbon, 1989), pp. 146-47.

among them Sheikh Shuaib and Kharg.¹²⁵ The pearl divers throughout the Gulf were Arabs who lived on the coast, and it has been suggested that about 4,500 ships and more than 30,000 people worked in the fishery.¹²⁶ Nearly all the ports on the Arabian coast, and many on the Persian, were involved in the industry. The fishery took place between mid-May and the end of September. The pearls were sold on board, at the pearl banks, or at Bahrain, Qatîf and other towns on the Arabian coast and Hormuz.¹²⁷

The principal island on the Persian littoral is Qishm.¹²⁸ It is the largest one in the Gulf. The island of Qishm is 60 miles long and 90 miles across, and lies parallel to the coast. It is situated in the Strait of Hormuz, and stretches along the Persian coast from Kung and Lengeh almost to Bandar Abbas. It is separated from the mainland by a channel which is navigable for ships, and its coast is generally rocky. It has several ports, but is mostly very shallow.¹²⁹ It has plenty of palms, gardens, and wells, which supplied Hormuz with water. This island was important in the conflicts between the Persians and the Portuguese before the fall of Hormuz in 1622. Off the southern flank of Qishm are the islands of Larak and Hengam;¹³⁰ both are barren and hilly.¹³¹

Basra or Al-Basra (*Al-Ubulla*) is not an island, but it was and still is the most important trade gate of Mesopotamia. It had great importance, both economically and politically, in the period with which this thesis is concerned. It is situated on the west

¹²⁵ Between Bandar Dilam and the outlet through the Straits of Hormuz are the islands of Kharg, Shaikh Shuaib, and Qays, which are all small, low, rocky, and fringed by reefs. *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 24.

¹²⁶ Khesro, Safar Namāh, p.144-45; *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 175-77.

¹²⁷ Al-Qasimi, *Power Struggles and Trade in the Gulf*, p. 25; F. Adamiyat, *Bahrein Islands* (New York, 1955), p. 3.

¹²⁸ Queixime or Broct in Portuguese or Qishm in English. The native Arabs called it *Jezirat Al Tawila* ('the long island'). Its fall into Persian hands was a serious blow for Hormuz. For more details about its geographical situation see *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. 1, p. 75; Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 152.

¹²⁹ Tenreiro and Afonso, *Viagens por Terra da Índia a Portugal*, p. 25; *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, p. 152.

¹³⁰ Later in the nineteenth century a British coaling station and also a telegraph station were established on the island of Hengam.

¹³¹ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 24.

bank of the Shatt Al-Arab, and about 67 miles from the bar, like a bridgehead overlooking barren stretches linking the Gulf and the Mediterranean.

5. The Meeting of Civilisations

The clash of cultures that occurred in the Indian Ocean after 1497 is a common theme in writing about the Portuguese. It is often symbolised by the misunderstandings of da Gama's pathbreaking voyage to India in 1497, and the suspicion that then became embedded in Portuguese policy as it became clear that the rim of the Indian Ocean was populated by significant numbers of Muslims. All of this is set against a tendency to measure 'advanced' against 'backward' in the Portuguese-Asian encounters of the 1500s: advanced European weaponry against medieval South Asian technology; or the focused aggression of the Portuguese state against the disparate and disconnected interests of the Indian Ocean potentates. More recent historiography has tended to emphasise the weaknesses that the Portuguese brought with them to the Indian Ocean rather than the triumph of European arms: Portugal's fragile economy has been emphasised for example, and the lack of interest that Portuguese trade goods generated on the Malabar Coast has reminded scholars of the wealth and scale of the Indian Ocean's trading networks. These are important correctives; but they should not in the end disguise the fact that the encounters of the 'discovery period' set the tone for Portuguese attitudes and administration for much of the sixteenth century, and that, in the Gulf at least, the economic success of the *Estado da India* depended more on accommodating existing forms and patterns of commerce rather than building something new. Here, at least, through the unlikely lens of a puppet regime propped up by Portuguese force, we can see something of how the protagonists benefited in certain respects from the European occupation.

In Hormuz we can find plenty of evidence of hatred, distrust, and mutual miscomprehension – indeed, it will be argued in the end that a lack of Portuguese

understanding of regional politics contributed to their demise as an occupying force.¹³² However, the rationale for the Portuguese presence was economic, and in the conduct of trade we can find evidence of the accommodation and adjustment referred to above.

The Gulf, in comparison with India or Southeast Asia, was culturally homogenous. Most of the people were Muslims with tiny minorities of Christians, Jews and others. Most people spoke Arabic, even the Persians and the Turks since it was the main language of Qurān, and was used as a *lingua franca* in the markets of the Middle East. In addition, the region was mostly uniform in its hostile reaction to the arrival of the Portuguese in the 1500s.¹³³ However, Hormuz occupied a unique position within the *Estado da India*, and even within the Gulf. There were no villages or villagers in Hormuz, because it was barren and salty. There were no agricultural areas in Hormuz, and no local water supplies for the inhabitants to use.¹³⁴ It was a town on an island without any real historical pedigree, without any deep civilization or cultural identity. It was not notable for its social, cultural or religious activities.¹³⁵ It was merely a trans-trade post, limited in everything. Most of its people were local or foreign merchants. Even though many travellers and chronicles passed through Hormuz on their travels through the Gulf, none of them stayed there more than one or two seasons before moving on. Hormuz was almost an artificial settlement; created out of nothing to serve the interests of trade and its ruling dynasty.

Hormuz bore the hallmarks of a centre of 'trade diaspora' as defined by Curtin, where two or more cultures existed side by side.¹³⁶ It was a centre of cross-cultural trade. Prior to the Portuguese occupation the most frequent contacts were between Arabs and Persians, though the city did attract a much more cosmopolitan group of

¹³² See Chapter 5, below.

¹³³ See Chapter Four (especially 4.1, 4.3).

¹³⁴ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (Cambridge, 1962), vol. II, p. 400.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

¹³⁶ P. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 11.

merchants from the eastern rim of the Indian Ocean. The arrival of the Portuguese exaggerated the existing situation by adding new variables to it. However, this thesis, though much concerned with trade, is really the history of a cross-cultural encounter between the peoples of the Gulf and the first sustained European presence.

When we speak of cross-cultural exchange we should be aware that Hormuz posed different problems to other zones of Portuguese influence, whether in India, Southeast Asia, Africa, or Brazil. In Hormuz, the Portuguese had a small native population to deal with, and in fact most of their dealings were with the royal family and its officials. The distinction, or gulf in some instances, between specialist merchants and society at large noted by Curtin was not so pronounced in Hormuz, though it could be found elsewhere in the kingdom and the region.¹³⁷ The policies enforced after Hormuz was occupied concentrated almost exclusively on trade, with the revenues of *Alfândega* at their centre. After the city was conquered, it was left to the Portuguese to re-establish Hormuz as the commercial hub of the Gulf, and in this they were reasonably successful, especially in their dealings with the Persians. Much of what had been threatened by the military occupation of Hormuz was salvaged; but in all of this the Portuguese were primarily following established precedent and rebuilding or renewing partnerships established by the viziers of Hormuz and the city's commercial party.

When the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean at the end of the fifteenth century, they quickly acquired knowledge of the winds, currents, routes, and ports in their search for a pattern of strong points that would give command over the sea-lanes. As a result, as Curtin states, the 'trading-post empire' that emerged took the shape of earlier Asian trade networks.¹³⁸ Over time, Portuguese culture 'reached deeply into the

¹³⁷ Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, p. 5.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

ecumenical patterns of Asian commerce, just as other new trade diasporas had influenced it in the past'.¹³⁹

For example, communication was one of the initial practical problems of Portugal's trade diaspora. In the Gulf, from their first arrival the Portuguese needed interpreters (*linguas*). Albuquerque got the help of some Hormuzian merchants in 1507 in his negotiations with the king and the vizier of Hormuz.¹⁴⁰ In 1517, in addition to the Portuguese and the local *linguas*, Hormuz had two Indian interpreters, one Gujarati, the other a Christian from Malabar.¹⁴¹ Gradually a form of Portuguese became important in the Gulf and in the Indian Ocean – it was perhaps the dominant *lingua franca* in Asian maritime trade, and it held that position until it was supplanted by English at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴² This new language was an amalgam of native borrowings (Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Malayan, etc) and Portuguese, and it was conscious as much as organic in its development: by recruiting people from heterogeneous origins and cultures in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese hoped to embrace a wide range of languages. For example, a Jew of Ashkenazi origin came to India as an interpreter for Vasco da Gama.¹⁴³

The experiences of some of the *linguas* inform us about another form of cultural cross-fertilisation, namely the conversion to Christianity of Muslims. Hormuz was an obligatory port of call for the new Christians of Arabian origin that went to India. Castanheda observed that there was some Muslims who became Christian, including three *linguas* called Caspar Martins, Gaspar Rodrigues, and Salvador Rodrigues. It seems likely that they remained at Hormuz to assist the Portuguese officials in the

¹³⁹ Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, p. 143.

¹⁴⁰ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. 107-11, 121-2.

¹⁴¹ See Farinha, *Os Portugueses no Golfo Pérsico, 1507-1538*, p. 30.

¹⁴² Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, p. 143.

¹⁴³ D. Couto, 'The Role of Interpreters, or *Linguas*, in the Portuguese Empire during the sixteenth Century', *e-JPH*, Vol.1, no. 2 (2003), p. 2.

alfândega there.¹⁴⁴ Later, Martins was appointed as interpreter for the delegation of Fernão Gomes de Lemos to Shah Ismail, and he received one hundred and fifty *cruzados* for his services.¹⁴⁵ In fact most of *linguas* in the Gulf earned good wages: one who translated between the king of Hormuz and the Portuguese received over 129,000 *reis* a year; but the interpreter of the judge of Hormuz received a salary of 7.200 *reis* each year, about 600 *reis* per month.¹⁴⁶

Ultimately, then, communication across the Gulf became easier and this would have facilitated both the establishment of the Portuguese regime in Hormuz and the revival of trade passing through the city. Regarding the conduct of trade in Hormuz, before the arrival of the Portuguese matters were settled between the society of merchants, the royal family and the viziers. Transactions were made either by money or by exchange. For all goods, with the exception of gold and silver, there was a ten per cent duty. The king and the royal family were not directly involved in trade, but they shared in the revenue of the customs-house. The balance of authority between the king and the vizier and the merchants contributed to the stability of Hormuz, even though there were internecine struggles from time to time. Out of necessity, the Portuguese employed not only the system of tax organisation they found in Hormuz, but also the whole machinery of revenue collection and administration. However, under Portuguese rule foreign administrators dominated the city's institutions, particularly after 1521, and therefore merchants were unlikely to develop formal political and economic relations with other merchant communities without first passing through the Portuguese authorities.

¹⁴⁴ F. Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos e Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, vols. I, III, pp. 326, 845.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ See T. O. Matos, *Estado da Índia nos anos de 1581-1588* (Ponta Delgada, 1982), pp. 24, 27; V. M. Godinho, *Les finances de l'état Portugais des Indes Orientales (1517-1635)* (Paris, 1982), p. 167.

Before the Europeans arrived in the Indian Ocean, business and the shape of trade depended on open markets and the trust that developed between the merchants, the brokers, and the buyers, notwithstanding the time and distances involved. Trust extended to payments due after one year or more. In the Gulf there was a system of trading called *dallāl*. This existed with the advent of Muslims in India; the brokers were generally termed *dallāl*, an Arabic word.¹⁴⁷ This suggests the key role that brokers played in trade in the Islamic world at that time. Commercial agencies or *feitorias* seem to have been a European introduction.¹⁴⁸ The *feitor* was the pivot of Portuguese commerce. His primary function was to store, buy and sell merchandise, but he often fulfilled other day-to-day tasks connected with navigation and mediating with the local authorities.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, the Portuguese evidently borrowed the system of Shah-bander (*rei do porto*) from the East. There was a Shah-bander in Hormuz.¹⁵⁰ In addition, the Portuguese initiated changes in the recording of transactions through the use of *conhecimentos* and *mandados*. All expenditures, excepting petty and out-of-pocket expenses, had to be supported by a receipt, voucher or bill of lading (*conhecimento*), signed by the receiver, even in the case of an extraordinary expense authorized by a warrant *mandado* from the higher authority.¹⁵¹ Thus, the routine of business in the Gulf saw a great deal of continuity before and after the arrival of the Portuguese, but with a number of European refinements. Practical experience would have caused the mechanics of trade to evolve further during the sixteenth century.

¹⁴⁷ A. J. Qaisar, 'The Role of Brokers in Medieval India', *Indian Historical Review*, vol. I, no. 2, (1974), p. 220.

¹⁴⁸ J. Villiers, 'The Estado da India in South Asia', in *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, ed. M. Newitt (Exeter, 1986), p. 38.

¹⁴⁹ Thomaz, 'Portuguese Sources on Sixteenth Century Indian Economic History', *Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems*, ed. John Correia-Afonso, p. 104.

¹⁵⁰ A.T. de Matos, (ed.), *O Orçamento do Estado da India 1571*, (Lisbon, 1999), p. 24.

¹⁵¹ Thomaz, 'Portuguese Sources on Sixteenth Century Indian Economic History', p. 108.

In the related field of shipbuilding, there is clear evidence for cultural and technological cross-fertilisation. Muslim shipbuilders quickly emulated European construction techniques, and, according to Almeida, ships and galleys were being built in northern India in 1508 that were equivalent to those of the Portuguese.¹⁵² It is known that Arab vessels of the fifteenth century were sewn, and that sewn boats made long passages.¹⁵³ The ships in the Gulf, like those in the Indian Ocean, were made without iron fastenings, the planks being held together by cords made from the husk of coconuts.¹⁵⁴ It seems that the use of iron fastenings was introduced to the Gulf by the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In fact, linguistic evidence suggests some of this cross-cultural trade in the Gulf during the Portuguese period, which affected that region more than most others. For example, the Arabs in the Gulf used a number of Portuguese expressions belonging to the discovery period, such as, *kāwiya*, *karwa*, *ṣuwar kabirt*, *durmait*, *kalf āt and kilfāt*.¹⁵⁵ All of these words, as Johnston and Muir point out, refer to what might be called the basic techniques of shipbuilding which the people in the Gulf quoted from the Portuguese. It is only to be expected that local shipbuilders in the Gulf should imitate the methods of their rivals, and with the new methods they would also borrow words for objects that they themselves did not already have. The word *kāna*, still in use in the Gulf, is probably derived from the Portuguese *cana* and it means ‘tiller’.¹⁵⁶ However, this does not mean that Arab ships were badly built. Much like other aspects of the Portuguese-Arab

¹⁵² G. Scammell, ‘Indigenous Assistance in the Establishment of Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean’, *Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems*, ed. John Correia-Afonso, p. 165.

¹⁵³ T. M., Johnston, and J. Muir, ‘Portuguese influences on Shipbuilding in the Persian Gulf’, *The Mariner’s Mirror*, vol. 48, no.1 (1962), p.59.

¹⁵⁴ *Hasad Naduat Al-Derasat Al-Omanieah*, (Oman, 1980), vol. 4, p. 111; Gaspar, Correia, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, p. 242; J. Muir, ‘Reminiscências Portuguesas na Arábia Oriental’, in *Separata do Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1961), pp. 44-45.

¹⁵⁵ The existence of words like: *kāwiya* from *cavilha* (pegs), *karwa* from *çurva* (knee), *ṣuwar kabirt* from *coberta* (deck-beams), *durmait* from *dormente* (sleeping stinger), *kalafaāt* and *kilfāt* from *calafêto* (caulking the ship).

¹⁵⁶ Johnston, and Muir, ‘Portuguese influences on Shipbuilding in the Persian Gulf’, p. 23.

An existing economy that worked well, much like an Arab *bagalah*, had the potential to work even more efficiently with a few modifications; but the experience of the Gulf seems to show that success in this process of hybridisation and exchange came more easily when the modifications were complementary rather than indiscriminate. The ‘curious’ decision of the Portuguese, which could never be reversed, to protect their own trade in the Indian Ocean through force and to sell protection to others, underpinned by the threat of violence, was quite alien to the peoples of the Gulf.¹⁵⁷ This shock, allied with the military occupation of Hormuz, inevitably did some damage in the short-term. Ultimately, however, the Portuguese presence mellowed and there is evidence of adjustment and accommodation on both sides, even if European cultural forms were unlikely to become deeply rooted in the kingdom of Hormuz. The whole issue of understanding and cultural integration between Arabs and Portuguese, some glimpses of which have been examined above, would benefit from more research.

¹⁵⁷ Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, p. 137. He points to the real enigma of Portugal’s discovery of the East – ‘Portuguese shipping could have joined in free competition with existing traders’.

Chapter One: The Discovery and Conquest of the Arabian Gulf

One of the most famous Portuguese explorers and captains, Afonso de Albuquerque, reported that the three key strong points of Goa, Hormuz and Malacca would ensure Portuguese control of the major spice routes in the Indian Ocean.¹ Albuquerque, of course, implemented this strategy of establishing Portuguese nodes around the rim of the Indian Ocean during his governorship in the early sixteenth century. Control of shipping – the economic lifeblood of the region – was the clear intention, and in Hormuz, already a significant commercial and political centre, Albuquerque chose an appropriate and valuable objective.

1.1. A Gulf ‘Power’: Hormuz before the arrival of the Portuguese

If the stories of Sindbād show us the level of commercial contact reached between the Gulf and India in the Islamic period, ancient history also tells us that India had been in direct contact with the seamen of the Gulf.² Indian ships sailed across the Gulf and also to the Arabian Sea up to the Red Sea and maintained intimate cultural and commercial connections with Egypt, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula and other countries of the Near East.

The Gulf and its strait was the natural route between India, Mesopotamia and Egypt in Hellenistic times. Commercial contact between India and the Gulf depended on the arrival of the monsoon winds, and the amount of rain they brought with them, because the monsoon was the governing factor controlling shipping in this region.³ Thus, Indian and Arab navigators had long been familiar with the monsoon winds in the

¹ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. xii-xiii, xxxix-xl.

² *The Book of Thousand Nights and One Night*, trans. P. Mathers, (London, 1951), see ‘The voyages of Sindbād the sailor’, pp. 249-329.

³ M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat* (California, 1976), p. 9.

Indian Ocean that blow from south-west to the north-east between April and August, and then in the reverse direction from December to March.

Arabian contact with India concentrated on the western Malabar Coast. From the beginning of the eighth century, the western trade of Malabar passed into the hands of Muslims, most of them from the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. The good commercial relationships between Malabar and the ports of the Gulf helped them to establish close connections with cities in the Mediterranean such as Cairo, Alexandria, Tunis, and Aleppo. Malabar also played a part in trans-shipment; its ports provided passage between Gujarat, a textile producing region in northern India, and the far distant spice islands of South-East Asia. The most significant port in Gujarat before the arrival of the Portuguese was Cambay, which also had important links with Hormuz.

Goa, much further south, also had connections with the Gulf. According to Barbosa it was 'a great place of trade in merchandise'.⁴ It was between twenty-four to fifty days from Goa to Hormuz by sea, depending on the winds. Because of its strategic position, after 1510 Goa became the Portuguese governor's official residence.⁵

During the fifteenth century there were a number of international routes across the Indian Ocean, one of them from Gujarat to Hormuz. Cargoes dispatched from Gujarat to the Gulf destined for Syria were generally trans-shipped at Hormuz, Qays or Bahrain into smaller vessels bound for Basra.⁶ Gujarati vessels called at Hormuz and Muscat, and some of their merchants settled on the Gulf littoral, much as they did in the Red Sea. Abdul Razzaq, an Indian traveller in the mid-fifteenth century, observed that the merchants of Gujarat went to Hormuz to trade there.⁷ As the Gujarati merchants

⁴ Cited by T. Albuquerque, *Goa: The Rachol Legacy* (Mumbai, 1997), p. 4. For the pre-Portuguese period see also R.P. Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961* (Bombay, 1963), p.22.

⁵ C. J. Borges, 'The Portuguese and their Hormuz-centred Gulf Policy', *Al-Awatheekah*, 18 (Bahrain, 1991), p. 190.

⁶ *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, ed. T. Raychaudhuri, and Irfan Habib (Cambridge, 1982), vol. I, p. 146.

⁷ *India in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. R.H. Major (New York, 1867), p. 6.

traded and settled freely in the Gulf region, similarly Gulf merchants were welcomed all along the coast of Gujarat by the Muzaffarids.⁸ What is more important is the fact that Gujarat imported bullion from the Gulf. It was one of the Gulf markets that the Muzaffarids depended on for much-needed currency.⁹ It is therefore clear that Gujarat stood in commercial interdependence with the Gulf.

Muslims not only largely monopolised seaborne traffic in the Indian Ocean, but in southern India they also distributed the merchandise they brought. The Muslims were keen traders but never attempted to acquire political independence, except when it was essential for the conservation of their own community, in spite of Portuguese assertions to the contrary. On the Indian coast they accepted the conditions and policies that they found there.¹⁰

Merchant fleets from the Gulf traded freely in all the Indian ports, and launched their operations all over the Indian Ocean, reaching as far as Mozambique, South Africa, and the South China Sea.¹¹ The main stops on the way were Cambay and Calicut. After the ninth century they seem to have entered into effective competition with Gujerati merchants for the spice trade of the Indonesian islands, for when Albuquerque arrived on the Malayan coast he noticed Arab, Hindu and Chinese merchants competing openly in the markets of that area.¹² During the twelfth century the Chinese were in commercial contact with Sri Lanka, Quilon on the Malabar Coast and Hormuz in the Gulf. In 1433 the Chinese famously withdrew from these ventures.

⁸ Muzaffarid Gujarat had become a powerful maritime kingdom and emporium of commerce in the Indian subcontinent. See S. A. Tirmizi, 'Gujarat-Gulf Relations 1405- 1573 AD', *Al-Watheeka*, 14 (Bahrain, 1993), pp. 223-24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 224; *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, pp. 412, 417.

¹⁰ R. S. Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India (1497-1550)* (Westminster, 1899), p. 3.

¹¹ M. N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London, 2003), pp. 60-4, 78; G. F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring* (Princeton, expanded edition 1995) chapter 2 *passim*.

¹² *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. III, pp. xvii-xviii, 80; L. F. Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*, trans. M. J. Pintado and M. P. M. Silveira (Lisbon, 2000), pp. 23-4.

The Arabs, Persians and Turks traded across the Arabian Sea to Cambay, Calicut, and China to Malacca.¹³

From the above, it is apparent that there was a huge and complex commercial network in the Indian Ocean before the Portuguese arrived. The Portuguese contribution to this economic network was the diversion of trade and goods direct to Lisbon. To this end they set up factories along the Indian Ocean coasts, built military installations and naval bases. Moreover, they took control of many of the strategic entries to the ocean, such as the Cape of Good Hope, Socotra at the entrance of the Red Sea, Bahrain and Hormuz in the Gulf, as well as Malacca at the entrance to the South China Sea. At the same time, the Portuguese used force to prevent the export of Malabar spices along the traditional Muslim sea routes to the Mediterranean, in particular through the Red Sea – but they were unable to control it.

Salgur Shah, a king of Hormuz, once observed:

Dele uzman bara man Kabab hast
Ke Aguerd man dariah hast¹⁴

(‘Mine enemy’s heart is within him,
because he sees me live saved by the sea’)

This view was absolutely correct, because the position of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf gave it a great strategic position in world trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Hormuz was a cosmopolitan trading centre and the heart of a maritime empire – if it can be called such – in the Gulf when the Portuguese arrived in Asian waters. Apart from Hormuz itself, the ‘empire’ included some of the neighbouring territories and islands off both the Arabian and Persian shores. However, it is necessary to distinguish between Old Hormuz on the mainland and Hormuz the island.

¹³ C. Borges, ‘The Portuguese and their Hormuz-centred Gulf Policy’, p. 184.

¹⁴ J. Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal* (Tehran, 1947), p. 2.

Old Hormuz was the name given to a small port located on the mainland of Persia on the east side of the entrance to the Gulf at the head of the Khūr Mināb River, opposite the island to which it later moved.¹⁵ The city was founded in the third century by Ardashīr Papakan I (224-41 AD), the founder of the Sasanian dynasty of Persia, who ruled until the Muslim conquest of Persia.¹⁶ The small port evolved into a state, and between the fourth and tenth centuries Hormuz grew to be the principal port for the provinces of Kirmān, Sīstīn and Khurāsān.¹⁷ To protect their trade routes and territory, the Sultans paid tribute to the kings of Lār and Kirmān, and for some time remained a vassal of those kings.¹⁸ According to Tūrān Shah, from about 1100 AD (493 H) Old Hormuz had its own dynasty of Arab rulers.¹⁹ The first and founder of the dynasty was Muhammad Dirhem-Ku or Kub, who was probably from Yemen or Oman where most of the later rulers and viziers of Hormuz originated.²⁰ In the twelfth century (sixth century H), Old Hormuz was described by famous Arab historians and geographers, including Idrisi, Istakhri, Yaquet Al Hamawi and Muqaddasi, as rising in importance to become the dominant city of Kirmān. Yaquet Al Hamawi, for example, concluded that ‘Hormuz is the main port of the Persian coast and Kirmān. All the ships and merchants as well come there, all the commercial barges arrive, and from this city India’s commerce moves to Kirmān, Sīstīn and Khurāsān.’²¹

¹⁵ The name of Hormuz has changed many times since it transferred from the mainland in Persia; it has been variously known as Armūz, Armuza, Harmūz, Hurmuz, Urmūz, Harāmiz, Aramuz, Agramuz, Garamuz, Ormuz, Harmuz. See *EI*, New ed., vol. III, p.584; J. Aubin, ‘Le Royaume d’Ormuz au Début du XVIe Siècle’, p. 80. In addition, the name Ormus or Ormuz is the usual spelling adopted by Portuguese travellers for the celebrated trading town of Hormuz. See *GEPB*, volume, XIX, (Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro, 1945), p. 639; Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 7.

¹⁶ Belgrave, *The Pirate Coast*, p. 5.

¹⁷ See *EI*, New ed., vol. III, p. 584.

¹⁸ *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. A. Ricci (London, 1931), p. 45.

¹⁹ *Torunxa* in Portuguese. Tūrān Shah’s work is entitled *Al-Shāhnamat (Xa noma)*, ‘The History of the Kings’. He began with Adam at the beginning of the world. An abstract of this book is given by Teixeira in *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*.

²⁰ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 153-54.

²¹ Y. Al Hamawi, *Muajam Al-Buldan* (Beirut, 1990), pp. 459-60.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Old Hormuz was the centre of the commerce between Persia, India, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Gulf. In this it supplanted the position previously held by Qays Island, another port on the Persian coast.²² Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller, visited Old Hormuz in 1272 and again in 1293, describing it as a large and noble city of considerable trade.²³ However, its situation on the mainland left Old Hormuz vulnerable to attack. In 1300-1 (699-700 H) the Tartar tribes attacked and destroyed the city, which led the king and all the inhabitants to abandon the site and move to another island, called Jarūn.²⁴ The barren island of Jarūn became 'New Hormuz', which between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries developed as an important port of trans-shipment for goods from India and the Far East. The city of Hormuz was built on the plain, on the northern side of the island, which had the best anchorage for ships. The Portuguese fort was built near the small bay on the eastern side of Hormuz, a quiet shelter from most winds, with sufficient depth of water for ocean-going vessels.²⁵

The earliest account by an Arab writer of New Hormuz was that by Ibn Buttuta. During his travels in the Gulf in the first half of the fourteenth century he described the city as large and wealthy, with busy markets where merchandise from India and Sind was despatched to Iraq and Persia. Ibn Buttuta also drew attention to the local pearls, which the king used in his rosary, and described them as the best in all the East Indies.²⁶ The Russian traveller Afanasii Nikitin, who visited Hormuz in 1472, confirmed that it was a vast emporium where peoples and goods of every description from all parts of the

²² In 1229 the Sultan of Qays was killed and his island fell into the hands of the Sultan of Old Hormuz. See A. Farougy, *The Bahrain Islands (750-1951)* (New York, 1951), p. 60.

²³ *The Travels of Marco Polo*, pp. 44, 58.

²⁴ J. Barros, *Ásia de João de Barros*, vol. II, Liv. II; and D. Couto, *Décadas*, vol. v, Liv. x, both describe the founding of the kingdom of Hormuz on the island of Jarūn. See also *EI*, New ed., vol. III, p. 585.

²⁵ C. Constable and A. Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, pp. 149-50. See Plate VII.

²⁶ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb, vol. II (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 230, 408-09. For more details about pearl fishing in the Gulf see Chapter Two in this study.

world were gathered.²⁷ Such was its splendour and wealth that Hormuz was described as the ‘Jewel of the world’s ring’ (*Pedra do Anel do Mundo*) by European travellers and writers. These included Ludovico di Varthema, who visited Hormuz in 1503, just five years before the arrival of the Portuguese. From his very timely description, it seems that the city was at the height of its development and commercial prosperity, and the region’s chief port. Varthema gives a good account of the ships and merchants of the city.²⁸ Tomé Pires, who visited Hormuz on his way to China in 1513, described the kingdom as ‘rich and noble, it is the key to Persia. The people of Hormuz are civilized and domestic men; they are warlike and have good arms and horses’.²⁹ The best descriptions of Hormuz just before and during the Portuguese period can be found in *The Book of Duarte Barbosa* and *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*. Both preserve extensive knowledge about the city, the island, its weather, merchants and merchandise, people, language, food and drink, and the trade in horses and pearls, especially that from Bahrain and Qatif.³⁰

Without its port, however, Hormuz would have been worth nothing. All of its supplies, even daily necessities, came from outside, mostly from Gombroon in mainland Persia and from the neighbouring islands of Qishm and Qays. From Basra came local products such as butter, sugar, corn and rice, in addition to other supplies from Sind, Bangalore and Bhatkal in India.³¹ All travellers who visited Hormuz mention that the city suffered from shortages of fresh water. This had predictable consequences when the city was besieged, and doubtless contributed to its fall in 1622.

²⁷ *EI*, New ed., vol. III, p. 585.

²⁸ *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, trans. J. W. Jones (New York, 1863), pp. 94 -9; Barros, *Ásia*, vol. II, Liv. II, pp. 48-9.

²⁹ T. Pires, *The Suma Oriental*, vol. I, p. 19.

³⁰ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, pp. 90-4; *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 164-68.

³¹ ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz Cota*: Cartas Missivas no. 10, pp. 126-28.

The ruling dynasty in Hormuz was Arab and Sunnite. The residents spoke Persian and most of them were Muslims. Besides the Persian and Arab merchants, there were Christians from Spain, Russia, Georgia and Germany, and some Jews who came via Venice. This cosmopolitan mixture of residents also included pagans and Banyans from India, and a significant community of Armenians who assimilated with the local Muslims through their dress and language. These Armenian merchants played an important part in the kingdom's economic life.³²

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, quite soon after its establishment, New Hormuz became more colonial in outlook, with the aim of exerting control over the Gulf's trade. During the reign of Shah Qutb Al-Din Tahamtan II (1318-46), Hormuz became embroiled in a war against Qays and Bahrain, sparked off by commercial rivalry and disputed ownership of the local pearl fishery and fresh water springs. The Shah of Hormuz captured Qatîf, Kharg island, and Derab (an island near the Shatt Al-Arab) and subjected both the Persian and Arabian shores to an annual tribute.³³ Hormuz later expanded beyond the Gulf region. During the first half of the fourteenth century the cities of Quriyat,³⁴ Khûr Fakhân, Shabâ, Kalbâ,³⁵ and Suhâr³⁶ were under the control of Hormuz.³⁷

In the midst of this expansionism, however, the real territorial extent of the kingdom remains somewhat uncertain. From Portuguese and some Persian sources it

³² E. Michael, *Ralph Fitch Elizabethan in the Indies* (London, 1972), pp. 26-7.

³³ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 173-81. See also Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 103-05; Adamiyat, *Bahrein Islands*, p. 16; A. Faroughy, *The Bahrain Islands*, pp. 59-60.

³⁴ Curayyat (or Curiate) is situated on the Omani shore. Barbosa provides a good description of this commercial centre: 'The people there are on a thriving trade in merchandize. It has a great store of food, and many very excellent horses bred in that same land and the Moors of Hormuz come there to buy these and take them or send them to India'. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I. p. 70.

³⁵ Kalbâ (or Calba, Culba) is also in the Southern part of the Musandam peninsula with a fortress, which the King of Hormuz maintained there for the defence of his lands. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I. p. 74.

³⁶ Suhâr (or Sohar) was one of the oldest and richest towns in Oman. It was the starting-point of a well-marked route from the coast into the interior of Oman through the mountains. It remained in Portuguese hands until 1643. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I. p. 71.

³⁷ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, p. 399.

might seem that by the early fifteenth century the king or shah of Hormuz exercised his authority as far west as Kharg island, as far east as Ras al-Had (*Cabo de Rocal-gate*) in southern Oman and to Makran on the Persian mainland.³⁸ Also under his rule was the province of Muscat,³⁹ several ports on the coast of Oman, including Qalhāt,⁴⁰ Julfar,⁴¹ Dibba, and Lima, and other cities mentioned by Ibn Buttuta. Hormuz's authority also extended to the main entrepôts, harbours and islands of the Gulf, such as Bahrain, Qays, Qatîf, Qishm Nabadé, Lengah, Carmon,⁴² Shaikh Shuaib,⁴³ Kharg,⁴⁴ Kangun,⁴⁵ as well as Mughistān and the district on the Persian mainland east of the Strait of Hormuz.⁴⁶ Also, Hormuz controlled a 70 km wide strip between the kingdom of Lār and the Gulf,⁴⁷

³⁸ See Maps II, III, below.

³⁹ Muscat (or Masqate): a large town on the Omani coast, with a good harbour and anchorage, shaped like a horseshoe. It had prosperous trade and a substantial fishery; fish were exported to many countries. Albuquerque in his commentaries said it was an important centre of commerce and the principal port of the country at the time when the Portuguese arrived. *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 83.

⁴⁰ Qalhāt, (or Calaiate) situated on the south coast of Oman. It is now just a little village on the Ras-al-Had, the eastern point of Arabia. At that time it was a large town, dating back to the fourteenth century. It has been said that Khwaja Attar, the vizier of Hormuz, was a native of this city. In addition, the princes of Hormuz, according to the *Shāhnamat* of Turan Shah, came from Qalhāt. Ibn Battuta describes Qalhāt as a city which had fine bazaars and one of most beautiful mosques. Most of the people there were traders, and made a livelihood by what come to them over the Indian Ocean. See *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. II, pp. 396-97; *The Travels of Pedro Taxeira*, pp.155-58; Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 97-9.

⁴¹ Julfār is situated beyond the Straits of Hormuz, west of Ras Musandam and was used as a pearl fishing station. The traders of Hormuz came to buy the large pearls for export to India and elsewhere. Julfār's trade brought great revenue to the king of Hormuz. *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, pp. 93-4.

⁴² *Armam* or *Camron* in Portuguese. *Cambroon* in English. A large town on the Straits of Hormuz north-west of Hormuz Island, which was the English trading settlement from the early part of the seventeenth century, when Shah Abbas renamed it Bandar Abbas (the port of Abbas). See *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 75; Constable, and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf pilot*, pp. 150-51.

⁴³ See Introduction above, footnote 125, p. 40.

⁴⁴ Kharg (or Khark; Portuguese *Corgo*). This rocky limestone island is unique because it is one of the few islands in the Gulf with fresh water. Its position has given it importance from time to time until it became an important trading centre under the Dutch after they were expelled from Basra in 1748. See *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 76.

⁴⁵ *Congo* in Portuguese; this port was occupied by the Portuguese at the beginning of sixteenth century. See G. N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian question*, vol. II (London, New York, 1892), p. 406.

⁴⁶ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. 83-4; F. Adamiyat, *Bahrein Islands*, p. 16.

⁴⁷ At that time Persia did not yet extend to the Gulf.

and most ports of the northern coast of the Gulf between Bandar Rig and the island of Hormuz.⁴⁸

By the end of the fourteenth century, then, Hormuz had influence over the entire coast, both on the Arabian and Persian sides; its neighbours could not threaten it by sea because they lacked the necessary naval forces in the Gulf and Arabian Sea. However, it does not necessarily follow that Hormuz was a strong naval power: indeed, the kingdom was rather weak in this respect; sufficient forces were available to exert local control, but they were certainly insufficient to withstand the Portuguese at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The security of the city, as well as its wealth, lay in its natural position.

In analysing the political structure of the kingdom, which of course affected its policy in the Gulf, it can be seen that its administration was organised as follows:

the governor [vizier] and customs-master at the head of the administration;

a permanent garrison with full military supplies;

a tax collector reporting to the governor;⁴⁹

officials working as assistants to the governor, some of whom were Arabs.

Under certain circumstances the separation between economics and politics in Hormuz could be more marked than, for example, in the Indian Muslim kingdoms. The shah of Hormuz, more than the rulers of Malacca, appeared to have run a semi-tributary, semi-commercial state.⁵⁰ Administration was shared between the hereditary king and the vizier ('governor' or 'prime minister'), who was the leader of the Commercial Council of the kingdom. Official correspondence was written in two forms; one in the name of the king, and another in the name of the vizier. Few sources survive to illustrate precisely the division of authority in Hormuz, but, as Barbosa mentions, at the

⁴⁸ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 104-21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7.

⁵⁰ S. Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 103.

beginning of the sixteenth century the 'governor' (or vizier) ruled the city and maintained very strictly the commercial law of Hormuz. As an example, it was laid down that 'any person who gives short weight or departs from the fixed rate and the orders given to him, is punished with great severity.'⁵¹ Economic matters and two thirds of the kingdom's officials – collectors of customs and the like – came under the vizier's authority. Merchant families often contended for the role of vizier, since the holder of this position played an important part in formulating policy.⁵² The king, assuming he was strong enough to exert his personal rule, controlled military and diplomatic affairs. He also appointed the chief officials and collectors of revenue at trade centres outside Hormuz – on the Persian mainland, Arabian Peninsula, and the islands in the Gulf that were subject to him – but once in office these men were responsible to the vizier.⁵³ If kings were young, weak or otherwise vulnerable then the vizier could, and sometimes did, assume sole executive control of the kingdom. Barbosa implied very strongly that kings could be little more than puppets, kept under virtual arrest in the palace, and discouraged from taking an active interest in the business of the kingdom.⁵⁴ Saif Al-din, for example, 'a youth of no great age', was 'so oppressed by the dominion of the governor [vizier Noor Al-din, and his relative Rais Hameed], that he dared not do anything of himself'.⁵⁵

Thus, in effect, authority was split between the king and a council representing the city's elite composed of military commanders and religious dignitaries and notables. Frequently they supported the royal family.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I. p. 97.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 98-9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* See below, pp. 62-3 and 80-1 for the example of Khwaja Attar.

⁵⁵ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. 1, p. 102.

⁵⁶ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 146.

Who were the kings of Hormuz during the Portuguese period? Chroniclers such as Correia, Couto, and Castanheda give different names and dates for the reigns of the kings. However, after comparing their works with the *Shāhnamat* of Turan Shah, and with the works of Jahāngīr Qāemmaqāmi and Jean Aubin, it is possible to compile a list of kings as shown in Appendix I. Just as it is difficult to draw an accurate picture of the kings of Hormuz, it is also possible to find no more than about eighty per cent of the Portuguese captains of Hormuz in the same period, as shown in the same Appendix.

When Hormuz was only the power controlling the trade routes of the Gulf, no one could sail and conduct business without a permit from the kingdom.⁵⁷ Perhaps the Portuguese copied these ‘trade licences’ in their *Cartaz* system. Hormuz was in a position to make it illegal for anyone without a licence to engage in trade in the region, especially the Arabs of Oman. The least attempt to open a new outlet was promptly curbed.⁵⁸ Moreover, all of the boats engaged in pearl fishing were compelled to go to Hormuz to register for passes, which contributed some 1,500 *ashrafi* per year to the royal treasury.⁵⁹ All of the annual taxes – even those of the customs house – went to the palace treasury,⁶⁰ the only state expenditure was on salaries for the garrison and government officials.

Such close supervision and regulation of Gulf commerce produced opposition. For instance, it led the shaikhs of Oman to use the internal routes over the Arabian desert where they developed a thriving trade in horses with stock brought from inside Arabia and Persia. On the back of this success, Omani traders established new ports in Dofar and Mirbat on the south-west coast of Oman.⁶¹

⁵⁷ ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, pp. 30-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

⁵⁹ Borges, ‘The Portuguese and their Hormuz-centred Gulf Policy’, p. 193.

⁶⁰ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, pp. 98-9; Pires, *The Suma Oriental*, vol. I, p. 20.

⁶¹ Aubin, ‘Le Royaume d’Ormuz’, p. 141.

More generally, the Arabs of the Omani interior profited less from Hormuzian rule than the Persians. They, the Omanis, wanted a greater share of the whole trade of the region. The vizier and most important officials in the Omani ports were Hormuzian natives sent by the kings every year,⁶² or else Persians who had settled on the Omani coast. In addition, the Persian language, not Arabic, was used in official correspondence between the royal government in Hormuz and the ports on the Gulf and Omani shores. For this reason, and others, they rebelled against Hormuz in the fifteenth century.

1.2 Political Conditions in the Gulf

Affairs in the eastern Islamic world at the beginning of the sixteenth century were controlled by three main powers whose governors were not Arabs. These polities occupied great areas of the modern 'Middle East'. They were the Safavids in most of Persia and some areas of Iraq; the Ottomans in Turkey and some parts of Eastern Central Europe; and the Mamluks in Egypt, Syria, Hejaz and part of Yemen. Of the three, only the Safavids were present in the Gulf and wielded political and economic influence there. Because of this, as I have already implied, the economic and political character of the Gulf during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries revolved very much around the kingdom of Hormuz.

The profits of eastern commerce made Hormuz economically strong and enabled it to raise limited and poorly-equipped maritime forces – sufficient to protect the island and its interests. Because of this basic naval capability and economic buoyancy, perhaps against the odds, the government of Hormuz was able to maintain its scattered territories. More important still, the kingdom kept that free navigation of the Gulf which was its maritime lifeline. Yet the power of Hormuz was limited, and seemingly in decline by the early sixteenth century. Its control extended over most of the western

⁶² *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. 66-7.

coast of the Gulf and the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. This means that although the kingdom of Hormuz was close to the Persian side of the Gulf, its political and economic power was derived mainly from its settlements on the Arabian side. On that basis we can understand the impact on Hormuz of the loss of the Bahrain islands in 1602. When Bahrain was lost, the first wall of defence of the kingdom collapsed⁶³

Yet the situation in the Gulf was changing even before the arrival of the Portuguese. Politically, the Gulf became more fragmented. New powers emerged: the Safavid Persians, ruled by Shah Ismail, the founder of the dynasty;⁶⁴ the kings of Lār in southern Persia; and the Al-Juboor dynasty in Al-Hasa and the Bahrain islands. Hormuz found it difficult to hold its position in the face of these emergent Gulf powers, especially Persia. The kingdom ultimately fell under the influence of the governor of Lār and Kirmān district, who in turn owed allegiance to Safavid Persia. Hormuz therefore resorted to buying a measure of freedom through annual tributes. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Persians received 2,000 *ashrafi* in *Muqarrariyas*⁶⁵ in addition to other gifts.⁶⁶ The vizier of Hormuz, Khwaja Attar, organised these payments in the name of the king, Saif Al-Din Abu Nadar, who was a boy of twelve. Attar was the effective ruler of Hormuz when Albuquerque arrived in the Gulf in 1507. Up to this point, his achievements had been to maintain the kingdom's nominal independence and to open commerce with India.⁶⁷

Matters were compounded by the political frailty of Hormuz. Because of feuds between members of the royal family, the kings were like puppets in the hands of their respective viziers, who placed children on the throne in order to be able to rule alone.

⁶³ See Chapter Four, 4.3, below.

⁶⁴ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 83.

⁶⁵ Tenreiro and Afonso, *Viagens por Terra da Índia a Portugal*, p. 25. For *muqarrariya* see Chapter Two, p. 91.

⁶⁶ Faroughy, *The Bahrain Islands*, p. 62.

⁶⁷ Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 10; Adamiyat, *Bahrein Islands*, p. 16.

The importance of the monarch was even reduced to the point where, although he appeared to guarantee the unity of the kingdom, he was in fact no more than a figurehead.⁶⁸

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, the kingdom of Hormuz was weakened from within by disputes among the ruling family, and threatened from without by fear of attack by Persian mainland tribes.⁶⁹ The bloody war that erupted between factions of the Hormuzian royal family destroyed the monarchy's dignity. This dispute encouraged the Arab tribes along the shores of the Arabian Peninsula to move against Hormuz, to obtain their freedom and independence. In addition, this war brought to the throne Saif Al-Din Abu Nadar, who could do nothing about the kingdom's administration and could not control the trade and territories under his authority, both inside and outside the Gulf.⁷⁰ Because of his youth and inexperience, he took no measures against Albuquerque's fleet when it first arrived in 1507. All the preparations for facing the Portuguese expedition were made by Khwaja Attar. In spite of this, Albuquerque was unable to complete his conquest of Hormuz.⁷¹

On the other side of the Gulf, a second political power was at its height in the early sixteenth century. The kingdom of Al-Juboor – founded in the mid-fourteenth century in Nejd by a group sometimes known as the Arabs of Bahrain or the 'Arabs of the East' – comprised of Al-Hasa oasis and the Bahrain islands, in addition to some districts on the mainland of the Arabian Peninsula, as Albuquerque mentions in his commentaries.⁷² Their rule extended ultimately to Al-Hasa, Qatīf, and parts of Oman

⁶⁸ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp.139-40.

⁶⁹ A. N. Al-Humaidān, 'Al-Tarekh Al-Siāsī Li Al-Juboor', *Mujalt Kulate Al-'Adab*, Jameat Al-Basra, 16 (Basra, 1980), p. 51.

⁷⁰ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 127, vol. iv, p.109; Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. II, pp. 339-41; Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, pp. 8-9.

⁷¹ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 108.

⁷² *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 83-4.

and the Bahrain islands. The Al-Juboor tribe was related to the Aqail, the people of Bani Amer Bin Abdul-Qais. The tribe of Bani Amer belonged originally to Nejd, and, like most tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, they were Arab migrants.⁷³

The expansion of Al-Juboor brought it into conflict with Hormuz. By the 1350s Al-Hasa and Qatîf were under the subordination of Hormuz, while the Bahrain islands were ruled directly by it.⁷⁴ According to Al-Sakhawi, Saif bin Zamil bin Jubr, the second ruler we know of, was able to establish control over Bahrain around the middle of the fifteenth century.⁷⁵ He ruled it justly and the people were loyal to him.⁷⁶ During the reign of his successor, Ajwad bin Zamil, the borders of Al-Juboor were pushed further; his influence spread far and wide, and wealth poured into the kingdom from more than one source. Zamil's authority extended until he could claim to control a great part of the coastline of the Gulf. He also established good relations with the Indian Bahmani kingdom.⁷⁷ In 1506 Ajwad abdicated in favour of his son Mohammed, and Mohammed bin Ajwad was evidently given the title of king of Bahrain between 1506 and 1507. In turn, Mohammed was succeeded by his brother, Muqrin bin Ajwad bin Zamil, although we do not have a definite date for his accession. Perhaps it was in the first quarter of the sixteenth century as Ibn Ayas, a contemporary historian, referred to Muqrin as 'an Arab prince from Bani Jubr who owned from Bahrain to Upper Hormuz'.⁷⁸

⁷³ A. Ibn Basam, (Manuscript) 'Tohfat Al-Mushtaq fi Akhbar Najid wa Al-hejaz wa Al-Iraq', *Mujalt Al-Darah*, 1 / 4, (Riyadh, 1975), pp. 66-71; *Bahrain through the Ages*, ed. A. K. Al-Khalifa and A. Abahussain (Bahrain, 1995), vol. 2, p. 92.

⁷⁴ Al-Humaidân, 'Al-Tarekh Al-Siāsī Li Al-Juboor', p. 38.

⁷⁵ S. M. Al-Sakhāwi, *Al-Daw'a Al-Lāmi'a fi li- Ahl Al-qarn Al-rāsi'*, vol. I p. 190.

⁷⁶ Al-Humaidân, 'Al- Tarekh Al-Siāsī Li Al-Juboor', p. 42.

⁷⁷ A. Al-Humaidân, 'Makanat Al-Sultan Ajwad bin Zamil Al-Jubri fi Al-Jazirat Al-Arbiah', *Mujalt Al-Darah*, 4/7 (Riyadh, 1982), p. 64.

⁷⁸ M.A.Ibn Ayas, *Bad'a Al-Zuhur fi w'aqi Al-Duhu*, ed. Mohammed Mustafan Zeadh, (Cairo, 1961) , vol. 5, p. 431.

These details concerning the gradual rise of Al-Juboor are not merely incidental. They are crucial to our understanding of relations between Al-Juboor and the kings of Hormuz prior to the invasion of Bahrain in 1521 by a combined Portuguese-Hormuzian force.

Back in Hormuz itself, a series of events occurred in 1417 which resulted in the rebellion of Saif Al-Din Mahar against his father, Qutb Al-Din Tahmtan III Firuz Shah, forcing the latter to abdicate the throne. In the same year, as described by the Hormuzian chronicler Nimdihi, the Arabs of Bahrain rose in revolt on the Arabian coast and captured Al-Hasa oasis. Later, in 1440, they also took Qatîf in the wake of another dispute which arose between the two brothers, Saif Al-Din and Fakhru Al-Din Turan Shah II.⁷⁹ These events left the ruler of Al-Juboor as king of Al-Hasa and Qatîf.⁸⁰

After the death of Turan Shah II, a tragic civil war broke out in Hormuz among his four sons. This struggle left three brothers dead, and resulted in the blinding of all the relatives of the royal house who might have been dangerous as pretenders to the throne.⁸¹ The fourth brother, Salgur, sought the assistance of his wife's father, who was the ruler of Oman. The Omanis were not in a position to help, so, in agreement with Ajwad bin Zamil, Salgur instead gave up his rights to the island of Bahrain and Qatîf in return for military aid and regular tribute payments from Al-Juboor.⁸² Portuguese and Arab sources agree that both Bahrain and Qatîf were actually under the subjection of Al-Juboor when the Portuguese entered the Gulf. As a result of these negotiations, Al-Juboor sent an army and ships to the assistance of Salgur, which accompanied him to

⁷⁹ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 124, note 290.

⁸⁰ Ibn Basam, 'Tohfât Al-Mushtaq fi Akhbar Najid wa Al-Hejaz wa Al-Iraq', pp. 67-8, Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', said that Al-Juboor occupied Al-Hasa in 1460, but this is not consistent with the local Arabic sources.

⁸¹ In 1515 Albuquerque sent around fifteen of these blind princes from Hormuz to Goa, where he gave orders for them to be maintained at his expense, so that they might end their days there, and not cause any disturbance to the king in Hormuz. Barbosa, *A description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the sixteenth century*, p. 49.

⁸² A. Ibin Majid, *Al-Fawâ'id Fi Ausûl Al-Bahr Wa Al-Qawâ'id*, p. 302; *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, pp. 180, 189; Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 134-38.

Hormuz and restored his authority over it. The influence of Ajwad grew in consequence, and the position of Salgur was made secure.⁸³ Al-Juboor's support of Hormuz provided an opportunity for the Arabs to increase their influence in the Gulf region at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Salgur Shah, however, had a short memory. After he came to power, he ignored his agreement with Ajwad and demanded tribute from Bahrain, which Ajwad refused to pay. There followed a number of failed Hormuzian assaults on Bahrain. A second agreement, giving up Bahrain to Al-Juboor in return for an annual payment, also failed to resolve the conflict.⁸⁴ In 1511, directly after the death of Ajwad, Khwaja Attar, the vizier of Hormuz, launched a successful attack on Bahrain; but this merely brought retaliatory attacks on Hormuzian settlements in the Omani interior, and in 1511 Attar was eventually forced to withdraw his forces from Bahrain, restoring it to Al- Juboor.⁸⁵

The political and diplomatic character of the Gulf was further complicated by a third regional power, Safavid Persia which was founded by Shah Ismail Safawi (1499-1524) in Azerbaijan in around 1500. By 1510 the rest of Persia and Iraq Al-Arab had been brought under Ismail's control, after ten years of hard fighting.⁸⁶ The Safavid conquest of Iraq was the first stage in the bloody hostility between the Shiite Persians and the Sunnite Ottomans. As a result, it appears that when the Portuguese arrived in the Gulf, the fundamental problem of both domestic and foreign policy for Persia was her conflict with the Ottoman Empire, which overshadowed her relations with all other powers.⁸⁷ What began as a difference in religious beliefs developed into a very

⁸³ A. Abahusain, 'Al-Juboor- Arab Al-Bahrain', *Al-Watheeka*, 3 (Bahrain, 1983), p. 92.

⁸⁴ Al-Humaidān, 'Makanat Al-Sultan Ajwad Bin Zamil Al-Jubri fi Al-Jazirat Al-Arbiah', p. 62.

⁸⁵ A. O. Almulah, *Tarekh Hajir* (Al-Hasa, 1991), vol. 2, p. 191.

⁸⁶ P. M. Sykes, *History of Persia* (London, 1951), pp. 159-60; P. M. Savor, *Studies on the History of Safawid Iran* (London, 1987), pp. 81-2.

⁸⁷ Adamiyat, *Bahrein Islands*, p. 19.

prolonged, destructive struggle between the two powers during the lifetime of Sultan Selim I (1511-1520).⁸⁸

Such divisions within the Islamic world at the turn of the sixteenth century were extremely advantageous to the Portuguese. They undoubtedly exploited the hostility between the two major Muslim powers of the Gulf by aligning themselves with Hormuz against Al-Jaboor. Forces were dispatched to Bahrain to help restore Hormuzian control of the island: this was simply an element in their plan to capture Bahrain, oust the resident Arabs, and then consolidate their control of the region. Similarly, though the struggle between the Safavids and the Ottomans ended with Persian defeat at the battle of Chāldirān in 1514, Sultan Selim still feared an alliance between Europeans and the Persians. In this at least his anxiety was justified. Shah Ismail actively searched for a strong ally against the Turks, and the only European presence in Gulf waters was Portuguese. This proved significant for later events in the region. Furthermore, in 1516, while the Mamluks were preparing a third campaign to drive the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean, Selim attacked and subjugated Egypt, deposing its ruler and obviously destroying any opportunity for action against the Portuguese.⁸⁹ It is important to note here that the Ottomans exploited the conflict between the Portuguese and the Mamluks to their own advantage, knowing that the latter were compelled to commit resources against the new European threat to their traditional commercial network.⁹⁰ Why Selim afterwards failed to engage the Portuguese is a different, and difficult, question. The Ottoman fleet which took part in the conquest of Egypt, along with the surviving

⁸⁸ A. Mutawalli, *Al Fath Al Osmani L'a Al-Sham wa Mesr* (Cairo, 1995), pp. 48-9.

⁸⁹ Ibn Ayas, *Bad'a Al-Zuhur fi w'aqi Al-Duhur*, vol. 5, pp. 307-09.

⁹⁰ Mutawalli, *Al Fath Al-Osmāni L'a Al-Sham wa Mesr*, p. 258.

Mamluk vessels and their *Kapudan*, was ordered back to Istanbul rather than being trans-shipped across Suez for use against the Portuguese.⁹¹

Thus, it may be said that the destruction of the Middle Eastern Islamic world came from within as much as without: the internal conflicts and the Portuguese invasion were a double blow against the Islamic Arabic entity.

1.3 The European Context: The Objectives of Portuguese Exploration

Prince Henry the Navigator,⁹² the third son of João I, is the man traditionally associated with the foundation of Portuguese maritime strength, ambition and expertise in the African Atlantic. He captured Ceuta in August 1415, and then continued his work until his death in 1460.⁹³ Some works of discovery were carried out under Prince Henry's aegis yet there is still healthy debate among historians about this central aspect of his life.

In Portugal the Prince's high reputation is unimpaired today, as appears from much of the recent output on the period.⁹⁴ In fact, this thesis is not directly concerned with the truth or otherwise of Henry's achievements, and whether he was the real Portuguese hero, both of science and action. It is enough to recall Russell's point that Henry was not the first prince in the Iberian Peninsula to interest himself in geography and navigation.⁹⁵ Rather, I am more concerned with Prince Henry's motives insofar as they are emblematic for Portuguese activity on a broader front. Simple judgements on

⁹¹ A. F. Mutawalli, 'Al-Bahriyya Al-Othmanyaa wa Al-Burtughaliyya Fil Al-Qarn Al-Aashir Al-Hijri (Al-Sadis Aashir Al-Miladi) ala Dau Al-Wathaig Al-Turkiah.', *Meglat kuleat Al-alum Al-ejtemayh*, Jameat Al-Imám Mohammed bin Saudi Al-Islameah, no. 4 (Riyadh, 1980), pp. 384-85.

⁹² This common label, as Charles Verlinden points out, dated only from 1868, after the English writer R. H. Major published his work entitled *Life of Prince Henry surnamed the Navigator*. See Hattendorf, *Maritime History*, vol.1, 53.

⁹³ Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*, vol. I, pp. 131-36.

⁹⁴ See for example, J. M. Braga, *Hong Kong and Macao. A Tribute to the Memory of Prince Henry "The navigator"* (Hong Kong, 1960); J. Cortesão, *Os Descobrimentos Portugueses* (Lisbon, 1981).

⁹⁵ In this regard, reference may be made to Russell's important collection *Portugal, Spain and the African Atlantic, 1343-1490* (Aldershot, 1995). See also his more recent biography *Prince Henry "the Navigator"* (New Haven, 2000).

the relative importance of religion – not forgetting that Henry was the leader of the Order of Christ⁹⁶ – and economic gain seem to be as inevitable as they are unhelpful. It is perhaps enough to recognise that the two were not incompatible, as is suggested in the documents signed and sealed by the prince before his death in 1460. These documents ‘make it clear that there was no conflict between his [Henry’s] religiosity and his mundane concerns, whether as a sponsor of oceanic exploration or as a traditional medieval great territorial lord.’⁹⁷ Incidentally, Henry’s fortune was founded on piracy and control of the monopoly of soap.⁹⁸

Thus, leading from the example of Henry, in the historiography of Portuguese exploration two parallel elements may be considered as the basis for their enterprise. These will be discussed in turn.

The first is economic. This is the conventional explanation for Portuguese interest in long distance maritime enterprise. Economic histories of Portugal in the fifteenth century show that its kings had financial problems. No evidence of a general crisis in Portugal is available before the middle of the fourteenth century, but the debasement of coins was a common phenomenon after the Black Death in 1348.⁹⁹ Therefore, there was a great demand for gold and silver – a ‘Currency Crisis’. There had been no gold currency in Portugal since 1383, and it was one of the few European kingdoms in this position.¹⁰⁰ The devaluation of money continued from the 1350s until 1435 when African gold arrived in Lisbon after the capture of Ceuta.¹⁰¹ In addition, the Portuguese sought to improve their economic life through eastern trade, which had become such an obvious source of prosperity to the Islamic countries and Italian

⁹⁶ F. Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus*, p. 187.

⁹⁷ Russell, *Portugal, Spain and the African Atlantic*, XVII, p. 13.

⁹⁸ Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus*, p. 186.

⁹⁹ Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. I, pp. 97, 108-10.

¹⁰⁰ C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825* (London, 1977), p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. I, pp. 113-14.

maritime republics. This merchandise, most notably spices, was profitable because it passed through several monopolistic agencies from the East to Europe and Portugal therefore sought direct contact with traders in the Orient or even with producers. It was not willing to be the consumer at the end of a long chain of trade controlled by Muslims. The obvious precondition of this strategy was a sea route that could link Europe with India and the eastern territories, and therefore circumvent or even replace the ancient trade routes that passed through Asia and East Africa to Europe.¹⁰² The understandable motive was economic efficiency – to cut out the middleman and trade directly, and more profitably, with the producer.

In so doing they would also intrude upon the ‘Muslim lake’.¹⁰³ In the fifteenth century much of the Indian Ocean traffic was handled by Muslims, though they did not monopolise eastern trade. Jains, Jews, Hindus, Armenians, Chinese and others also played a major role. Nonetheless, the visibility of Muslim shipping in the Ocean merely confirms how economic motives intertwined with others which are more difficult to assess in material terms. As Albuquerque clearly explained to his soldiers at Malacca, control over the spice trade was an attack on the financial prosperity of the Muslim nations, the significance of which both the Muslim powers and Portugal fully comprehended.¹⁰⁴ Manuel I (1495-1521), during whose reign the first seaborne expedition to the Indian Ocean was mounted, clearly stated its main objective in his letters to the king and queen of Castile: ‘the principal motive of this enterprise has been the service of God our Lord, and our own advantage’.¹⁰⁵ He also enumerated the spices, woods and other produce with which to equate ‘advantage’. After da Gama’s second

¹⁰² Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, p. 20.

¹⁰³ Pearson, *Indian Ocean*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 170.

¹⁰⁵ *A Journal of the first Voyage of Vasco da Gama 1497-1499*, trans. and ed. E. G. Ravenstein (New Delhi, 1995), pp. 113-15.

voyage, Manuel was more pleased by the tribute received from the Sultan of Kilwa than any advances in the Christian faith.¹⁰⁶

In this respect, I cannot agree with those Portuguese writers who argue that the early voyages had no economic motives and no real intention of securing control or preferential treatment for Portuguese traders in the East. The alternative is to suggest that, very simply, the Portuguese Crown wanted to discover the linking route between Europe and Asia and to enter into commercial arrangements like those enjoyed by the Venetians at this time.¹⁰⁷ On the contrary, the theory of Portuguese monopoly was developed during the reign of Afonso V as is mentioned below. Surely, João II's claim of monopoly in the Gulf of Guinea, with coastal installations to dominate the gold trade and forceful measures to exclude interlopers, must serve as a precedent not far removed in time, space or intent. Removal by force of competitors was also a characteristic of Portugal's early campaigns in the Indian Ocean – no pity was shown, and exclusive trading rights were defended with vigour, quite simply because it made economic sense.

However, it is going too far to claim that the Portuguese were compelled to embark on their 'campaign of discovery', as Padfield called it, because of the high spice prices that prevailed during the Mamluk ascendancy over eastern trade.¹⁰⁸ There is more than one source of evidence to demonstrate the opposite of what is usually regarded as one of the main factors behind Portuguese discovery. In the period preceding Vasco da Gama's voyage, the price of pepper in Egypt fell to 40-60 ducats per *qintār*,¹⁰⁹ having been about 85 ducats in the first decade of the fifteenth century.¹¹⁰ Ashtor's important research demonstrates that in the middle of the fifteenth century the price of pepper was

¹⁰⁶ *A Journal of the first Voyage of Vasco da Gama 1497-1499*, p. 226.

¹⁰⁷ Magalhães, *The Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (Lisbon, 1998), p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ E. Ashtor, 'Spice Price in the Near East in the fifteenth century', in *Spices in the Indian Ocean World*, ed. M. N. Pearson (Aldershot, 1996), vol. 11, p. 77.

¹⁰⁹ Worth 185 kg.

¹¹⁰ Ashtor, 'Spice Price in the Near East in the fifteenth century', pp. 70-3.

lower than in the Fatimid period.¹¹¹ Similarly, the prices of pepper and ginger in Venice at the end of the fifteenth century were about 13.5-14 ducats per 100 pounds,¹¹² compared with about 26 ducats in 1404. Thus, pepper and other spices became cheaper everywhere in the second half of the fifteenth century, and according to the various lists of spice prices at the time da Gama's voyage to the east, the price of pepper on the markets of the Near East was very low. Yet, after the Portuguese established their factories in the Indian Ocean ports at the beginning of the sixteenth century, pepper was sold in Lisbon to other European merchants at forty times its original price in India.¹¹³ The price of pepper carried by the Portuguese increased thereafter by between fifty and one hundred per cent in the first sixty years, and by 150 to 233 per cent in about seventy years after the Portuguese reached India and the Spice Islands.¹¹⁴

This shows clearly that an increase in the price of spices in Europe was not the real reason that led the Portuguese to the East; rather the motive was to break into this lucrative trade in order to support the weak Portuguese domestic economy.

Indeed, the crown itself showed the real purpose of the discoveries when it began to fight against the private sector – which was in the hands of Prince Henry – for control of the project. After Henry's death in 1460, his brother, Fernando, inherited the business of discovery, and he also refused to come under the crown sector. However, after Fernando's death in 1470, Afonso V succeeded in his attempts to exert control over West African and Atlantic enterprise, and from that point onwards exploration, discovery and exploitation were rooted in the public sector.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, merchants and monarchs alike became wealthy in and around the African Atlantic.¹¹⁶ Economic

¹¹¹ Ashtor, 'Spice Price in the Near East in the fifteenth century', p. 77.

¹¹² Worth 30 kg.

¹¹³ Ashtor, 'Spice Price in the Near East in the fifteenth century', p. 77.

¹¹⁴ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, pp. 155-58.

¹¹⁵ J. Cortesão, *Os Descobrimentos Portugueses*, vol. III, p. 819.

¹¹⁶ Maxwell, 'Portugal, Europe, and the origins of the Atlantic commercial system, 1415-1520', p. 4.

potential and actual returns encouraged further exploration of Africa in the well-known story of how Dias and then da Gama entered the Indian Ocean towards the end of the fifteenth century. But it is worth noting that the forms of economic activity that made the African Atlantic a success for Portugal – whether factories engaged in the trade for gold, slaves, ivory and other exotica or the beginnings of permanent settlement and sugar cultivation in Madeira, the Azores and elsewhere – though not costless, or even necessarily cheap, were arguably based on unequal exchanges. We may therefore ask if the early Atlantic phase of Portuguese enterprise was a useful or even relevant practical preparation for the commercial opportunities and realities of the Indian Ocean system. Africans gave raw materials and human resources, as slaves, in exchange for little that Africa did not already produce, and this is one of the most interesting facets of early Atlantic trade noted by John Thornton.¹¹⁷ Early African manufacturing was in many ways quite capable of providing for the continent's needs.¹¹⁸ Such favourable terms did not prevail in the Asian trade networks. The Indian Ocean world in its culture and economy was very different.

Moving from the economic underpinnings of Portuguese activity, religion is also considered to have had an important bearing on Portuguese exploration, driven by the simple desire to eliminate the Muslim presence in the East with papal support.¹¹⁹ This hostility, of course, derived from the Christian-Muslim conflict in the Iberian Peninsula and from the Crusades.¹²⁰ To be sure, Portuguese efforts received encouragement from Pope Nicholas V, who described Islam as a plague. The Papacy's support was expressed in a decree which was sent to Prince Henry in 1454: 'Our joy is immense to know that

¹¹⁷ John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 44.

¹¹⁸ For further discussion of terms of trade between Africans and Europeans in the early period See Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*; W. Rodney, *A history of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545-1800* (Oxford, 1970); idem, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, 1981); R. Austen, *African Economic History* (London, 1987).

¹¹⁹ Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. 1, pp. 162-63.

¹²⁰ Arnold, *The Age of Discovery*, p. 23.

our dear son Henry, the Prince of Portugal, marching in the footsteps of his father of illustrious memory, King John, inspired with a zeal for souls like an intrepid soldier of Christ, has carried into the most distant and unknown countries the name of God and has brought into the Catholic fold the perfidious enemies of God and Christ, such as the Saracens and the infidel Muslims.’¹²¹ The Portuguese believed that only Christians had any civic rights, and Portuguese policy in the East, from their first entry until the very end of their supremacy, is intelligible only in light of this belief.¹²²

Evidence of Portuguese religious objectives can be found in Manuel’s letters to the kings of Europe after the successful voyage of da Gama. He asserted that ‘the people we found there are not as yet strong in the faith [Christianity] and when they shall have thus been fortified in the faith there will be an opportunity for destroying the Moors of those parts.’¹²³

The use of religious emblems and the conscious destruction of Muslim commerce led some Arab historians to describe Portuguese exploration in the east as an extension of the Crusades.¹²⁴ Evidence cited in support of this view includes the symbolic use of the cross, with the full blessing of the Pope.¹²⁵ If Portugal had become heir to the Genoese tradition of exploration, as Marques points out, it had also become the champion of Christianity against Islam.¹²⁶ The spirit of the Crusades flourished in the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While in other regions of Western Europe Islam was a distant menace, to the people of the Iberian Peninsula it

¹²¹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, pp. 2-3.

¹²² K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese* (Bombay, 1929), pp. 26-7.

¹²³ Ravenstein, *A Journal of the first Voyage of Vasco da Gama 1497-1499*, p. 114.

¹²⁴ A. Al Batreekh, *Tarehk Oruba Al Hahdeth* (Beirut-1977), p. 47; N. H. Al-Serafi, *Al-nufud Al-Portukali fi Al-Khalij Al-‘Arabi fi Al-qaren Al-sadas Ashar* (Riyadh, 1983), p. 73.

¹²⁵ Y. A. Al-Thaqafi, ‘Mawqef Al-Mamalek wa Dual Al-Khalij Al-‘Arabi men Al-Portukaleen fi Al-qaren Al-sadas Ashar’, *Nadeat Ras Al- Khaimah Al-Taraikhia* (Ras Al- Khaimah, 1978), vol. I, pp. 146-47.

¹²⁶ Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. 1, pp. 73-4.

was something that threatened them in their homes.¹²⁷ The Iberians – unlike other Western Europeans – were crusaders by necessity, for even in the fifteenth century Muslim kingdoms existed in the Peninsula itself. Quite simply the fight against Islam was an imperative, and I am inclined to agree with Panikkar that much of the Portuguese conquest in Asia was motivated by this fact.¹²⁸

1. 4 The Portuguese Conquest of the Gulf

The history and progress of early Portuguese navigation in the African Atlantic and the Indian Ocean is well known.¹²⁹ More important than the story of da Gama's arrival at Calicut in May 1498 – a demonstration of audacity rather than ability in Fernández-Armesto's view¹³⁰ – are the results of this meeting of civilisations.¹³¹ Though not presenting a detailed narrative of Portuguese discovery and conquest, this section will nonetheless investigate several specific issues arising out of Portugal's initial expeditions to the Indian Ocean. The most important of these issues is the process by which the Portuguese established themselves around the rim of the Indian Ocean, and especially on the coast and islands of the Arabian Gulf at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Portuguese supremacy resulted from conquest on the sea, not on land; and that is what also happened in the Gulf during the early sixteenth century.

Da Gama's first contact with the Gulf occurred during his second expedition to India in 1502. The first Portuguese captain to attack the Omani coast was Vicente

¹²⁷ Fernández-Armesto, Felipe, *Before Columbus*, in particular 'The Conquest of Upper Andalusia' pp. 45-69.

¹²⁸ Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, pp. 27-8.

¹²⁹ For full general discussions of the voyages to West Africa and the Indian Ocean see C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*; B. W. Diffie and G. D. Winius, *Foundation of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580* (Minneapolis, 1977); J. B. Hattendorf, *Maritime History, vol. I: The Age of Discovery* (Malabar, 1996); A. J. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808* (Baltimore and London, 1998).

¹³⁰ Fernández-Armesto, 'The Indian Ocean in World History', in *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, p. 12.

¹³¹ A stimulating series of papers on the 'myths' and realities of da Gama's voyage can be found in *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*.

Sodré, in 1503. He was da Gama's nephew and an important commander in his own right, having led part of the fleet as the first *capitão do mar*. Sodré was in line to succeed da Gama in the event that anything happened to him during the Indian expedition, and he was entrusted with several dangerous military tasks.¹³² In 1503, between July and August according to Correia, Sodré sailed towards the south Arabian Peninsula coast with orders to close the Red Sea and destroy any Muslim trading ships there. With three *navios* and three *caravellas*, guided by Indian pilots, he attempted to capture Socotra island.¹³³ Because of his failure, however, Correia offers little information about Sodré's activities. It seems that he decided to start his mission on the Omani coast until the wind was suitable to sail towards Socotra and the Red Sea. Sodré's fleet anchored off the Curia Muria islands. The Omani people usually welcomed all travellers, but Sodré was wary of them as they were 'Mouros'. They advised him to be careful of the wind, though the Portuguese commander did not heed their advice and was wrecked and drowned in the Arabian Sea. The ships of his brother, Bras, were also wrecked, but he and his crew escaped to land.¹³⁴

In 1505, under the first viceroy in India, Francisco da Almeida, there was a tangible change in Portuguese policy towards the Indian Ocean.¹³⁵ Having rejected the passive commercial policy of the initial contacts, Almeida was sent out with an army to demonstrate Portuguese strength to the local rulers. Significantly, Almeida was also ordered to plant military settlements at six strategic points around the rim of the Indian Ocean.¹³⁶

Within this overall strategy for controlling and monitoring the trade of the Indian Ocean – a strategy of establishing 'choke points' – Hormuz was one of the first

¹³² G. Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. I, p. 340.

¹³³ Castanheda, *História do Descobrimetos*, vol. I, pp. 114-15.

¹³⁴ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. I, pp. 365-70.

¹³⁵ Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Moundo*, vol. II, p. 102.

¹³⁶ Magalhão, *The Portuguese in the sixteenth century*, pp. 51-55.

locations to attract the attention of the Portuguese. Almeida ordered two fleets to the Arabian Sea to control traffic there, and to prevent the movement of shipping from the Gulf to the Red Sea and, from there, to the Mediterranean.¹³⁷ In effect, this naval deployment would disrupt the activities of Arabic Muslim merchants more than any other group.

From these beginnings, however, the Portuguese very quickly moved on to the establishment of an 'empire', planned, built and sustained by brute force and violence. The transition from conspicuous military presence to full occupation in the Gulf was probably driven by a number of factors. First, the Portuguese obviously comprehended the region's great strategic importance, with Hormuz island at its entrance. The control of maritime trade surely required narrow seas to patrol and market centres to exploit. The Gulf offered both.¹³⁸ Second, the city enjoyed substantial customs revenue. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the annual tax yield of Hormuz was about 150,000-198,000 *Xerafin*.¹³⁹

The man charged with laying the foundations of the Portuguese empire in the East was Afonso da Albuquerque.¹⁴⁰ Almeida, the first viceroy, had contemplated only the establishment of factories for the maintenance of purely commercial relations.¹⁴¹ We can understand his position from a letter written to the crown in December 1508: 'The greater the number of fortresses you hold, the weaker will be your power. Let all your force be on the sea, because if we should not be powerful at sea, everything will at once

¹³⁷ Magalhão, *The Portuguese in the sixteenth century*, pp. 55-8.

¹³⁸ J. Z. Qasim, *Al-Khalij Al-'Arabi Fi 'Asr Al-Tawasut Al-Urobbi Al-Awwal 1507-1840* (Cairo, 1985), pp. 45-6.

¹³⁹ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. II, pp. 50-65; S. B. Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf* (London, 1966), p. 155. *Xerafins* or *xarafims* was the Portuguese term for the *ashrafi*. For further discussion see Chapter Two, section I, below.

¹⁴⁰ Afonso da Albuquerque never gained the title of Viceroy, in spite of his hard work to build and establish the Portuguese empire in the Indian Ocean in the beginning of the sixteenth century when he captured Goa, Malacca, and Hormuz. *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. xii-xiii, 11-19; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 97.

¹⁴¹ Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*, vol. II, p. 102.

be against us. As long as you are powerful at sea, you will hold India as yours, and if you do not possess this power, a fortress on shore will avail you little'.¹⁴² In contrast, Albuquerque believed that Portugal required permanent coastal bases, without which the navy could not maintain command of the sea. Albuquerque's emphasis was therefore on fortresses, believing that if strongly built and adequately garrisoned, they ran no risk of being taken. Perhaps he was right. Because of the monsoons, ships were useless for several months each year, and command of the sea was unfeasible. Albuquerque relied mainly on military installations for a more tangible and permanent form of dominion.¹⁴³ This view was evidently given careful consideration by the Portuguese crown, and it later became the main tenet of Portuguese strategy in the region.¹⁴⁴

From 1509 Albuquerque laid the foundations of the *Estado da Índia*, based on the fortresses of Goa, Malacca and Hormuz. After Albuquerque's death the *Estado* was expanded and linked together with a series of lesser fortified factories, such as Mozambique, Mombassa, Diu and Ternate in the Moluccas, which extended from the East African coast to the China Sea.¹⁴⁵ Given Albuquerque's outlook, it is hardly surprising that his objective in the Gulf was to erect one or more fortresses, not only for the protection of trade on shore, but also to enable him to coerce the native rulers into acknowledging Portuguese power. This principle guided all his later actions in the East.¹⁴⁶

The Gulf's place in this system can be traced back to the expedition of Tristão

¹⁴² Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*, vol. II, p. 103; Correia, *The three voyages of Vasco Da Gama and his Viceroyalty*, pp. lxvi- lxxvii.

¹⁴³ E. Prestage, *Afonso de Albuquerque, Governor of India* (Watford, 1929), p. 40.

¹⁴⁴ M. Al-Salman, *Al Gazw Al Purtukali Le 'Al Janub Al-Arabie wa Al-khalej fi ma baen 1507-1521*, p. 148.

¹⁴⁵ G. R. Crone, *The Discovery of the East* (London, 1972), p. 58.

¹⁴⁶ F. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. 1, p. 127; A. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf* (Oxford, 1928), p. 112; Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 140.

and a squadron of four vessels under Albuquerque.¹⁴⁷ Albuquerque was to fortify Socotra and then go to Hormuz, thus closing, it was hoped, the mouths of both the Red Sea and the Gulf.¹⁴⁸ After the capture of Socotra, Albuquerque parted company with da Cunha and proceeded to Hormuz as planned. En route he attacked several ports on the south Arabian coast which belonged to Hormuz, including Ras Al-Had, Qalhât, Quriyat, Muscat, Suhâr and Khûr Fakhân, committing the additional atrocity of mutilating defenceless prisoners.¹⁴⁹ As a result of his behaviour, Albuquerque rapidly earned a reputation for savage cruelty against the Muslim inhabitants of southern Arabia.

Hormuz presented the Portuguese with a much sterner challenge.¹⁵⁰ On reaching the island at the end of September 1507, Albuquerque demanded that its adolescent king, Shah Saif Al-Din Abu Nadar, should surrender to the Portuguese. After the king refused, Albuquerque destroyed Hormuzian trade ships in the harbour and landed his men.¹⁵¹ Al-Juboor set aside its dispute with the king of Hormuz and sent a relief fleet from Bahrain with men and supplies; but the Portuguese met the Bahraini ships near Qishm and scattered them.¹⁵²

With little hope of further support, Saif Al-Din was obliged to allow the Portuguese to build and garrison a fort at one end of the island.¹⁵³ The shah also agreed to pay an annual tribute, and granted the Portuguese certain customs concessions.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ ANTT, *A. G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-28, p. 371.

¹⁴⁸ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 20; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 116; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 112,180.

¹⁴⁹ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. I, pp. 792-93; *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 63.

¹⁵⁰ P. Vine, *The Heritage of Oman* (London, 1995), p. 71.

¹⁵¹ A. D. Farinha, 'A Dupla Conquista de Ormuz por Afonso de Albuquerque', *Studia*, 48 (Lisbon, 1989), p. 457.

¹⁵² See pp. 63-5 above. Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. III, p. 311; S. Özbaran, 'Bahrain in the sixteenth century' *Al-Watheekah*, 15 (Bahrain, 1989), p. 229.

¹⁵³ The Portuguese fort on Hormuz island was called 'Our Lady of Victory' (*Nossa Senhora da Vitória*), and was the first of the Portuguese forts on the Indian Ocean rim. The fortress was maintained until their exit in 1622. Farinha, 'A Dupla Conquista de Ormuz por Afonso de Albuquerque', p. 454. See also Plate IV of Hormuz fortress.

¹⁵⁴ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, pp. 129-30.

These early impositions formed the core of Portuguese economic policy in the Gulf. The king was obliged to pay 5,000 *ashrafi* towards the expenses of the fleet, and an annual tribute of 15,000 *ashrafi* to the Portuguese crown.¹⁵⁵ In addition, a treaty was signed in 1507 which did a lot to define the relationship between the Portuguese administration and the kings of Hormuz for the remainder of the occupation. The most important clause was that imports coming into Hormuz from Portugal should be free of duty, while merchandise bought by the Portuguese in Hormuz and its vassal ports should be liable to the same rates paid by natives.¹⁵⁶ The Portuguese further asserted their supremacy in the Gulf by forbidding native vessels to trade without a pass (*cartaz*).¹⁵⁷ Thus were laid the foundations for their naval and commercial domination of the Gulf, the specific dimensions of which will be explored in later chapters. These concessions from the king of Hormuz were later revised until, finally, complete control of customs passed into the hands of the Portuguese. Incidentally, in 1507 the king of Hormuz refused to pay tribute to Shah Ismail, having transferred his allegiance to Portugal.¹⁵⁸

On this occasion, the Portuguese presence in Hormuz was short-lived. Poor discipline and morale negated Albuquerque's efforts. A quarrel arose between the commander and some of his captains over the distribution of plunder, bearing in mind that most of the Portuguese captains and seamen had come into the Indian Ocean hoping to find wealth. Taking advantage of the dispute, vizier Attar refused to ratify the recently negotiated treaty; and when Albuquerque bombarded the town and attempted to blockade it, his captains opened direct negotiations with Hormuz and retired to India, despite his offer to refer the dispute to the viceroy. Albuquerque was forced to end the

¹⁵⁵ Barros, *Ásia*, vol.III, Liv. vii, p. 351.

¹⁵⁶ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. 130-31.

¹⁵⁷ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 102; *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 131; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 32. Danvers points out that the treaty of 1507 is missing and we cannot be sure about its clauses. *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 165.

¹⁵⁸ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, p. vol. 1, p. 145.

blockade.¹⁵⁹

Having been frustrated the previous year, Albuquerque returned to complete the occupation of Hormuz in 1508. However, he was not strong enough to take the city, especially after his captains left him for India; therefore he again left Hormuz and returned to India having become governor-general in succession to Almeida.

Seven years later, in February 1515, Albuquerque returned to the Gulf for the third and final time to settle the question of Hormuz. Rather than thinking in terms of grand strategy, it is quite likely that Albuquerque's immediate concern was financial: the treasury in Goa was exhausted. In order to pay his men, he needed the king of Hormuz's annual tribute, and, perhaps, an injection of portable wealth from the conquest of the city. A second, broader objective was to ensure that Hormuz did not fall into the hands of the Persian Shah, which was a possibility under the new vizier, Reis Hameed, who took over the administration of Hormuz in the chaotic family feud that followed Attar's death in 1514.¹⁶⁰ Albuquerque dealt with this particular problem by killing Hameed, by a trick according to Correia and Sousa.¹⁶¹ A new settlement was then negotiated with Turan Shah IV (1515-1522), the successor of Saif Al-Din, under which the island was handed over to the Portuguese and their garrison was installed in the fortress. Actually, only a few details are known about this second treaty between Turan Shah and his vizier Nur Al-Din Fāli on one side and Albuquerque on the other. We know that Turan Shah had to pay 20,000 *ashrafi* in reparation for goods that Albuquerque claimed had been stolen from the Portuguese factory in Hormuz. In addition, the king continued paying the tribute of 15,000 *ashrafi* each year to meet the expenses of the Portuguese fortress and garrison which were entrusted to a

¹⁵⁹ C. D. Belgrave, 'The Portuguese in the Bahrain Islands', *Al- Watheekah*, 31 (Bahrain, 1997), p. 226.

¹⁶⁰ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-7, Carta de Reis Xarafadim, alguzil de Ormuz, a D. João III, p. 78.

¹⁶¹ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 409-10; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 204.

‘Governador’.¹⁶² After the capture of Hormuz the Portuguese established the High Straits Fleet (*Frota elevada dos Estreitos*) which remained on station to protect the Gulf.¹⁶³

Shah Ismail, who in 1514 was preoccupied with his struggle against the Turks, could do nothing except protest at this violation of his territory.¹⁶⁴

Albuquerque died on board ship near Goa in 1515, leaving his nephew, Pero, at Hormuz. He was succeeded as viceroy by Lopo Soarez (1515-18), who tried to expand Portuguese influence in the Gulf by occupying Bahrain. To this end, a familiar Portuguese method was employed – the intervention in, and exploitation of, existing political divisions. On this occasion the opportunity was provided by the long dispute between Hormuz and Al-Juboor over the Bahrain islands. Claiming that Muqrin, the chief of Al-Juboor at that time, had incorporated Bahrain and Qatif into his domains, had refused to pay agreed revenues to Hormuz, and had molested merchant traffic sailing between Hormuz and Basra,¹⁶⁵ Turan Shah IV in 1521 invited the Portuguese to occupy Bahrain in order to solve the problem at its source. These particular flash-point motives were above and beyond the enviable wealth of Bahrain in agricultural produce, fresh water and pearls. For his part, Muqrin seems to have had ambitions to dominate the Strait of Hormuz. According to Barros, ‘The king travelled to Mecca in pursuit of his objective to bring Turkish craftsmen to build *fustas*’,¹⁶⁶ which were small oared

¹⁶² *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 103; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 204; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 318.

¹⁶³ Al-Salman, *Al Gazw Al Purtukali Le 'Al Janub Al-Arabie wa Al-khalej fi ma baen 1507-1521*, p. 209.

¹⁶⁴ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 102.

¹⁶⁵ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vi, p. 27. According to Barros, Muqrin had obtained vessels with oars made for him by ‘Turcos’.

¹⁶⁶ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vi, p. 27. ‘El Rey Mocrim, trabalhava também por se fazer senhor daquelle estreito, com trazer muitos navios no mar, e desta vez que veio de Meca trouxesse alguns Turcos officiães de fazer fustas, e outros que andassem nellas.’

ships like the Italian galleys of fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but more slender and faster.¹⁶⁷

With the sanction of Diego Lopes Sequeira, governor of India (1518-22), the Portuguese captain of Hormuz, Garcia Coutinho, agreed to help the king of Hormuz by sending an expedition of seven ships against Bahrain to enforce the payment of tribute. Command of the expedition was given to António Correia, the captain's nephew. It consisted of 400 Portuguese troops, filled out with 3,000 Hormuzian and Arab mercenaries who were transported in a fleet of 200 boats from Hormuz under the command of Sharaf Al-Din. This armada set sail from Hormuz on 15 June, but owing to bad weather the ships were scattered en route, so that when Correia reached Bahrain he had with him only part of his force.¹⁶⁸

The only description of the taking of Bahrain comes from Portuguese sources, and the numerical strength of the forces involved is unlikely to be accurate – but in any case the defenders must have far outnumbered the Portuguese and their Hormuzian allies. Muqrin had prepared defences and built earthworks along the shore in anticipation of an assault, but his main force remained inside the fort. He had a mixed force of Arab horsemen, Persian archers, a few Turkish musketeers, and about 11,000 Arabs armed with various weapons.¹⁶⁹ His troops were led by experienced commanders, but they had never before faced an attack by well armed European forces. Wading ashore, the Portuguese led the attack and stormed the Arab trenches, which were vigorously defended by Bahraini troops under the command of the king. The walls of the fort were breached with cannon. Muqrin died in the assault. The balance of

¹⁶⁷ *A History of Seafaring Based on Underwater Archaeology*, ed. G. F. Bass (London, 1972), p. 206-07.

¹⁶⁸ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vi, pp. 311-15.

¹⁶⁹ Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. v, pp. 93-6, 112-13; Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vi, pp. 318-23.

Muqrin's troops, now commanded by his nephew, Shaikh Hameed, withdrew to Qatif, which subsequently came under Portuguese control with the installation of a garrison.¹⁷⁰

In this manner the Portuguese won a decisive victory at Bahrain in 1521. The king of Hormuz had seemingly protected his own interests and stamped out rebellion through the skilful deployment of his European 'allies'; but for almost a century the city came under the nominal control of the Portuguese, who relied on Persian officials for local government.¹⁷¹ With the exception of Basra, by the end of 1521 the Portuguese controlled the main ports in the Gulf. They remained the only European nation in the Gulf, and their commerce prospered in the region. They were not, however, undisputed masters. Portuguese forces in the Gulf were frequently at war against the Turks who pressed southwards from their bases at Basra and Muscat.

Nevertheless, after the occupation Portuguese of Hormuz, the Gulf entered a new era, even as change came over the traditional balance of power which had affected the strategies of the local powers there. Thereafter, confrontation would manifest itself in the markets as much as the battlefield.

There are various reasons for the initial success of the Portuguese in the East – not least the political fragmentation of the region discussed above – but most scholars still lay emphasis on European maritime technology and its deployment by the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean.

At sea, the establishment and organisation of the technical frameworks for war and violence changed between 1500 and 1650. On that basis, the Portuguese controlled the sea by carrying heavy guns on their new caravels and naos, which they had

¹⁷⁰ For more details see Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. v, pp. 112-13; Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 650-51; Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vi, pp. 319-23. Later, in 1551, the Arabs of Qatif delivered up the fort of the city to the Turks.

¹⁷¹ Özbaran, 'Bahrain in the sixteenth century', p. 229.

developed from Italian models.¹⁷² Thus, the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean with their sturdy round ships, bristling with guns, slow, but devastating. The Venetians said that in their day the Portuguese caravels were the best sailing ships afloat.¹⁷³ The diffusion of cannon and naval techniques coincided with the rise and growth of European capitalism, which was represented by Antwerp, the economic capital of the Netherlands. Antwerp was the first city to tap the wealth, not just of an Inland Sea, but of the ocean. Until 1549, the Portuguese government made it the depot of the eastern spice trade.¹⁷⁴

Together, therefore, these were the sources of sea-power in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This new reality was demonstrated clearly in the Indian Ocean by da Gama's expeditions. The deficiencies of local vessels were such that only the Portuguese could have succeeded in winning a battle at sea. In fact, the great states in India at that time had been founded from the inside by armies marching overland, not by armies carried by ships over the sea. Calicut's fleet or other Arab and Muslim fleets (that of the kingdom of Hormuz, for example) had the advantage of speed, but did not possess the firepower of the Portuguese ships. The 'navies' of Calicut and the Arab Muslim states in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf were not high seas fleets, and were at best able to fight only in coastal waters.¹⁷⁵ At the battle off Hormuz in 1507, the Portuguese discovered this and later exploited it to the fullest advantage.

The only non-European power which had gunnery at sea was the Mamluk State in the Red Sea. At Chaul in 1508 the Muslims challenged the Portuguese and defeated

¹⁷² J. Glete, *Warfare at Sea-1500-1650* (London, 2000), pp. 1-6; Hudson, *Europe & China*, p. 20.

¹⁷³ C. R. Boxer, *Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion, 1415-1825* (Johannesburg, 1963), p.10; Hattendorf, *Maritime history*, vol. I, p. 113.

¹⁷⁴ Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 61; Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 85.

¹⁷⁵ K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London, 1953). pp. 44-5.

them in Indian waters,¹⁷⁶ but the Mamluks failed to follow up their victory. By the time the Ottomans – the other potential gunpowder naval power – awoke to this menace, Portugal had not only gained a foothold, but was in a position to continuously reinforce her fleet. Naturally enough, the Ottoman navy had its chief strength in the Mediterranean, not in the Indian Ocean.¹⁷⁷

Initially, when the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean the region's flourishing economy and vast population were subject to no single authority. This was as true of the Subcontinent as it was elsewhere.¹⁷⁸ The Portuguese came to the Indian Ocean not as decisive conquerors but rather as small but important players who disturbed the peace and stability of these waters. Given that their presence was often unwelcome, though not always so, the empire they established was largely dependent upon naval power structures. The Portuguese imported valuable Asian goods from port cities in the Indian Ocean and exported to them violence. As Glete observed, Europeans used violence to get monopoly rights to trade; and so the Portuguese introduced the European idea of using seaborne violence and protection as an export commodity.¹⁷⁹ As Pearson noted, the Portuguese introduced state controlled violence into the Indian Ocean.¹⁸⁰ The ideological reason was perhaps rooted in Roman claims to *Mare Nostrum*, and a 'general tendency toward s thalassocracy'.¹⁸¹ This does not mean that there was no violence in the Indian Ocean before the Portuguese arrived: there was

¹⁷⁶ Z. Al-Mbari, *Tuhfat Al-Mujahidin fi Ba'd Ahwal Al-Portugaliyeen*, ed. Mohammed Saeed Al-Twrehi, (Beirut, N.D.), p. 253; Ibn Ayas, *Bad'a Al-Zuhur fi w'aqi Al-Duhur*, vol. 5, p. 156.

¹⁷⁷ A. C. Hess, 'The Evolution of The Ottoman Seaborne Empire in the Age of Ocean Discoveries', *AHR*, vol. 75, no.5 (1970), pp. 1912-18.

¹⁷⁸ See M. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*; Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*; F. Fernández-Armesto, 'The Indian Ocean in World History', in *Vasco da Gama and the linking of Europe and Asia*; R. B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*; Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*; M. Al-Salman, *Al Gazw Al Purtukali Le 'Al Janub Al-Arabie wa Al-khalej fi ma baen 1507-1521*; J. De Baros, 'Aspects of Historical Relations between the Arab Gulf and India before the Portuguese Arrival', *Al-Watheekah*, 21 (Bahrain, 1992), pp.164-191; S. A. I. Tirmizi, 'Gujarat-Gulf Relations, 1405-1573', pp. 218-29.

¹⁷⁹ J. Glete, *Warfare at Sea 1500-1650*, pp. 72, 77.

¹⁸⁰ Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 123.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

piracy and violence against merchant shipping, but there was no systematic or policy-driven use of sea power. The polities around the rim of the Indian Ocean employed their navies only as auxiliaries to their armies. Asians were less accustomed than Europeans to using violence at sea.¹⁸² They well knew that the maritime trade did not live with violence.

¹⁸² See Glete, *Warfare at Sea 1500-1650*, pp. 77- 84; and Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 122-28.

Chapter Two: Shipping and Trade in the Arabian Gulf during the Portuguese Occupation

Any study of the Portuguese in the Gulf must take into account three facts that brought great change to the region at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The first reality was the arrival of a new foreign power; a power which rapidly captured the kingdom of Hormuz and exercised its grip on the Strait. European technology, and the mindset to use it, gave Portugal the capacity to control trade in the Gulf. The second reality was that after the establishment of the *Estado da Índia*, a great part of the proceeds of the exchange of goods in the Gulf, between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, was transferred to the Portuguese treasury. The third reality was that Portugal came to the Gulf with plans to stay as a permanent economic colonial power. Supported by their ships and substantial batteries of artillery, they constructed a series of trading *feitorias* and *fortalezas*, and about fifteen fortresses in the Gulf during the sixteenth century.¹ Yet in the Gulf, as in other parts of Asia, the Portuguese did not add any new structures to Asian trade. According to Steensgaard, Portuguese shipping – the famous *Carreira da Índia* – did not attain great economic significance as a connecting link between Europe and Asia.² For the Gulf at least, the persistence and importance of overland trade into the Portuguese period offers some support for this view, though the novelty and impact of the direct sea route should not be overlooked. Ultimately, however, the *Estado* became a territorial power more than a commercial network.³ This transition from trade treaties to direct control came at the very beginning of the Portuguese contacts with the East.

¹ A. Bocarro, *O Livro das Plantas de Todas as Fortalezas*, p. 20. See Map V below.

² N. Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 154.

³ P. Musgrave, *The Early Modern European Economy*, (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 170. Musgrave misreads *Carreira* for *Estado* in his comments about the growth of territorial power.

There was a triangle of three economic centres in the Gulf: Hormuz, Bahrain, and Basra. Any power that could hold these centres might have been able to control the region, economically and perhaps politically. The question remains one of assessing the extent to which the Portuguese achieved this during their occupation. All that the Portuguese were able to do, as we shall see in this chapter, was to collect profits from trade in the Gulf by control of *alfândega* at the port of Hormuz and by plundering those Muslim vessels that lacked letters of safe-conduct.

2.1 The Maritime Economy of the Gulf in the Sixteenth Century

The Gulf at the time of the Portuguese arrival was extremely cosmopolitan. Its ports, sited as they were in a hostile environment, were largely dependent for their existence on goods exchanged between India and local merchants. Hormuz lay at the heart of this commercial network as a small maritime 'empire' at the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁴

The gradual relocation of the main emporia from the inner Gulf to its mouth seems to have triggered two changes in the spatial organisation of markets in Oman and Persia. It caused the decline in importance of Oman's chief medieval ports, such as Sohar,⁵ and raised that of other ports on the Omani coastline in the fifteenth century through to the sixteenth century. These ports were closely linked to events centred upon Hormuz.

The kings of Hormuz did not directly control all the market centres in their hands. Rather, their kingdom seems to have been run along semi-tributary and semi-commercial lines. Over 98 per cent of the total revenues of the kingdom of Hormuz came from trade and customs revenue, especially on trade with India which yielded

⁴ See Chapter One, section 1.

⁵ T. J. Wilkinson, 'The Hinterland of Sohar', *JOS*, 9 (Muscat, 1987), pp. 68-70.

about 45 per cent of that revenue.⁶ Again, in this context it is important to reiterate the relationship between the region's climate and its economy. No one in the commercial council of Hormuz could predict the duration of the trade season or the level of customs revenue. In Basra, for example, the imminent departure of long distance caravans to Aleppo would set the markets in motion, as the merchants needed ships to catch the last monsoon winds back to India via Hormuz.⁷ That would terminally depress prices for those goods not yet sold, unless a local shopkeeper or resident agent took upon himself the task of selling them, piece by piece.⁸ In addition, the pearl fishery season usually occupied the summer months.

Not only the monsoon winds affected the annual revenue of Hormuz; economic relations between Hormuz and Persia were also very influential, perhaps more so than the climate. It was from the direction of Mughistān, Minab, Manujan and Vashkird,⁹ that the major overland caravans came and went, linking Hormuz to the cities of Persia and from there to the Levantine ports and markets. These four Persian districts together yielded about a third of Hormuz's revenue,¹⁰ as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Customs Revenues of Hormuz in the 1540s

Source of Revenue	Amount (in <i>ashrafi</i>)
Trade from Gujarat	35,000
Trade from Persia	35,000
Trade to and from Basra	9,000
Trade from Sind	8,000
Duties paid by Portuguese	10,000
Total	97,000

Source: Botelho, *Cartas Tombo*, ff. 76.

Note: in this table there is no mention of the pearl trade of Bahrain, Qatif and Julfar

⁶ See Tables 2.1 and 2.2, below.

⁷ See Introduction, section 4.

⁸ Klein, *Trade in the Safavid port city Bandar Abbas and the Persian Gulf Area*, p. 30.

⁹ See Map VI.

¹⁰ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 141.

The rich pickings from Hormuz's customs house had always been coveted by rulers on the mainland, and to maintain freedom of movement in these strategically and commercially important districts Hormuz paid a fixed sum, called *Muqarrariya*, to the dynasties that ruled fifteenth-century Persia.¹¹ This ensured that the caravan links remained unbroken. Without safe passage for the caravans, the prosperity of Hormuz would have collapsed.¹² This nexus was highlighted in a letter from Martim Afonso de Castro, viceroy of India, to Philip III.¹³ *Muqarrariya* was, in fact, a traditional financial system in the East and it was very important to the prosperity of Hormuz. This at least the Portuguese understood when they arrived. Nevertheless, Albuquerque forced the king of Hormuz to submit to the Portuguese tribute system of *Párea*.¹⁴ These actions had profound short-term consequences for the trade and commercial relationships of Hormuz, for they not only upset Hormuz, but also brought hostility from trading partners such as Lār.

We can catch a glimpse of economic life in Hormuz from the accounts of a few travellers. They include two Muslims, one from North Africa and the other from India. Ibn Battūta visited Hormuz in the 1330s during the reign of Sha Qutb Al-din Tahamtan. He described the city as follows:

‘Hurmuz is an island whose city is called Jarawn (Jerūn). It is a fine large city, with magnificent bazaars, as it is the port of India and Sind, from which the wares of India are exported to two Iraqs, Fārs and Khurāsān. Most of it is salt marshes and hills of salt. Their food is fish and dried dates exported to them from al-Basra and Oman. On this island water is an article of price; it has water-springs and artificial

¹¹ *Muqarrariya* was rendered annually by the kings of Hormuz for more than two hundred years. *Muqarrariya* or *mocarraria* is derived from the Arabic *moqarr*, which means something settled or fixed, not to be confused with *moqarrart* which means decisions or decrees. See R. Baalbaki, *Al-Mawrid, Arabic-English Dictionary*, (Beirut 13th edn., 2000), p. 1090. In the Persian language there is a similar word, *moqarrart*, which means a fixed amount or quantity. See A. K. S. Lambton, *Persian Vocabulary* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 155. However, Couto explained *muqarrariya* or *mocarrarias* as a Persian expression for a fixed tribute or revenue. D. Couto, *Décadas*, vol. I, liv. Ix, p. 81.

¹² A. Bocarro, *Décadas* 13, part I, p. 346.

¹³ *Documentos Remetidos da Índia ou Livro das Monções*, ed. Raymundo A. B. Pato, (Lisbon, 1880-1893), vol. I, pp. 218-2. Earlier letters suggest that cessation of these payments was considered whenever passage of Hormuz bound caravans was obstructed by Lār. See *Arquivo Portuguez-Oriental*, ed. J. H. C. Rivara (New Delhi-Madras, 1992), fasc. III, p. 137 (dated 1 March 1588).

¹⁴ See the Glossary.

cisterns in which rain-water is collected, at some distance from the city. At that time the island was in the grip of famine.’¹⁵

Around the middle of the fifteenth century an Indian traveler, Abd-Al-Razzak, also visited Hormuz and made some interesting, and rather poetic, observations about the place:

‘Ormuze, is a port situated in the middle of the sea, and which has not its equal on the surface of the globe. The merchants of seven climates, from Egypt, Syria, the country of Roum, Azerbaijan, Irak-Arab, and Irak-Adjemi, the provinces of Fārs, Khorassan, Ma-wara-amahar, Turkistan, the kingdom of Deschti-Kapt-chack, the countries inhabited by the Kalmucks, the whole of the kingdom of China, and Matchin, and the city of Khanbâlik, and others from all Indian ocean areas all make their way to this port. They bring hither those rare and precious articles which the sun, the moon, and the rain have combined to bring to perfection, and which are capable of being transported by sea. Travellers from all countries resort hither, and, in exchange for the commodities which they bring, they can without trouble or difficulty obtains all that they desire. Bargains are made either by money or by exchange. For all objects, with the exception of gold and silver, a tenth of their value is paid by way of duty. Persons of all religions, and even idolatrous, are found in great numbers in this city, and no injustice is permitted towards any person whatever. The inhabitants unite the flattering character of the people of Iraq with the profound cunning of the Indians.’¹⁶

From the early sixteenth century we also have an account from Varthema of the ships, trade and merchants of Hormuz: ‘There is seen sometimes almost three hundred ships and other kinds of vessels, which come thither from many places and countries. There are about four hundred merchants and factors that remain here continually for the traffic of merchandise.’¹⁷ Van Linschoten, although writing long after the arrival of the Portuguese, describes the groups of caravans that travelled to Hormuz overland from the Mediterranean via Aleppo. These companies of people came twice every year, in April and September. He also describes the large market held every year in Hormuz, between April and September, during which about five or six thousand merchants, all massed in order, as if for battle, bought and sold everything in the world.¹⁸ This cycle of

¹⁵ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. II, pp. 400-2.

¹⁶ *India in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. R. H. Major, pp. 5-7.

¹⁷ *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, pp. 94-9.

¹⁸ *The Travels of Van Linschoten*, pp. 48-9.

production and markets is unlikely to have been much different in the later fifteenth century. All of this shows the importance of Hormuz as a trade centre before the onset of the Portuguese.

The goods that were imported into the Gulf and Hormuz from the Indian Ocean included all sorts of spices: cloves from the Moluccas; nutmeg and mace from Banda; sandalwood from Timor; camphor from Borneo; benzoin from Sumatra; ginger, cardamoms and pepper from Sumatra and Java. All these goods came to the Gulf via Malacca and Calicut.¹⁹ From there they were conveyed across the land route, via Basra, up to the Mediterranean.²⁰ In addition, there was rice and copper, tamarind from Cannanore and Cochin, indigo, wax, iron, sugar, drugs, and cocoa-nuts, coconut oil, silk, steel, luxury cloth and black cloths, coarse cotton cloth which the Portuguese called *roupa preta de Cambaia*,²¹ which came from Cambay, Coromandel, Bengal and Dabhul and elsewhere,²² cloth of silk and benzoic from China and gold from Africa.²³

All of this trade was carried by vessels which, according to the monsoon, usually left India for Hormuz in October to March and returned to India in the summer.²⁴ Incidentally, the kings of Hormuz owned no ships, and did not participate directly in trade. Consequently, they could be said to have led a rather insecure existence. Hormuz was an entrepôt, not a maritime power.

When the Portuguese arrived, the revenues of Hormuz stood at around 198,000 *ashrafi*, as broken down in Table 2.2, below. Most of this came from taxes. For

¹⁹ L. Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*, p. 20

²⁰ Simão da Costa provided a list of these spices in his letter, see ANTT, *A. G.* vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, Carta de Simão da Costa a el-rei D. Sebastião na qual lhe participava achegada de um embaixador do turco ao vice-rei da Índia, para pedir pax. Goa, 1563, Dezembro, 11, p. 141.

²¹ ANTT, *A. G.* vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, Carta de Simão da Costa a el-rei D. Sebastião, p. 141. This '*roupa preta*' was sold in the marshland region of southern Iraq to people from Al-Muntafiq tribes.

²² *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 92-3

²³ *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, pp. 94-9.

²⁴ K. S. Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (Delhi, Manohar, 1983), pp. 4, 24. See Plate VII, below.

example, in 1500 the Persian historian Nimdihi suggested that the tax for goods arriving in the kingdom of Hormuz by sea was 10 per cent of their value, except for gold and coins which were taxed at a higher rate, and all goods from the provinces of Khurāsān which paid a preferential rate of 5 per cent.²⁵ The chronicler did not specify which goods came from Khurāsān. Similar taxes, called *ushur*,²⁶ were also collected in the port of Aden, from which the tax system of Hormuz appears to have evolved. The Portuguese themselves adopted the system already in force.

Table 2.2. The Kingdom of Hormuz's Revenues in 1500

Head	Amount (in <i>ashrafī</i>)
Customs Duties	100,000
Other Taxes at Hormuz Island	41,300
Qays Pearl Fishery	6,000
Bahrain Pearl Fishery and Qatīf	28,200
Revenue from Persian Territories	16,700
Other	5,800
Total	198,000

Source: Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 155; Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 233-37.

Taxes payable at Hormuz were in return for benefits provided by the port and the kingdom, such as the securing of merchandise and the use of storage facilities on the island. As we know, Hormuz was just a transit trade centre: the city was given the official title of *Dār Al-Amān*, or *Baldat Al-Amān* as Ibn Majid called it, meaning 'the place of safety'.²⁷

It is interesting to note, as Subrahmanyam points out, that the bulk of customs duties were collected on imports rather than exports.²⁸ Neither of the major exports in the eastward direction, namely horses and bullion, seems to have been taxed. An estimated 1,500 to 2,000 horses were exported from the Gulf and the coast of Oman to

²⁵ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 171-72.

²⁶ A. A. Abu Makhramah, *Tarekh Thagr Aden* (Cairo, 1881), vol. I, p. 14; J. Ibin Al-Mujawar, *Tarekh Al-Mustabser* (Holand, 1951), vol. I, pp. 141-2. See the Glossary.

²⁷ S. Ibn Majid, *Āl-Fawā'id fi Usūl ilm Āl-bahr wa' Āl-qawā'd*, p. 300.

²⁸ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500- 1700*, p. 16.

India each year, in particular to the ports of Honavar, Bhatkal (Baticala) and Goa. Sometimes the number rose to between 3,000 and 4,000.²⁹ The concentration of tax on imports in the port of Hormuz is not difficult to comprehend, for the bulk of Hormuz's trade was re-exporting, and to tax both imports and exports would have been tantamount to a double tax on the same commodity.³⁰

When the Portuguese arrived the kingdom of Hormuz did not have its own coinage because it lacked the requisite metals, despite being engaged in such extensive international commercial activity. Turan Shah's *Chronicle* mentions that the original founder of Hormuz was named Dirham-kūb, from his having been the first to strike coins.³¹ However, such ancient coinage and its value are not subsequently discussed in histories of Hormuz. By the beginning of the sixteenth century the *ashrafi* was in common use, as observed by Barbosa: 'in the city of Hormuz there is one coin of very good gold, round with Arabic letters on both sides, which are called *ashrafi* (*xerafins*) and are worth 300 Portuguese *reis*, more or less.'³² That *ashrafi* was, in later times, identical with the Indian gold currency, and gold coins of this type weighing about 170 grains were struck in Gujarat in the early part of the sixteenth century.³³ There were, in addition, some coins brought from Chaul and Dabhul to Hormuz in the course of trade.

When the Portuguese arrived they introduced their own coins – the *reis*, *pardau* and *cruzado*³⁴ – alongside those which were already in circulation (see Table 2.3, below). However, the Portuguese were aware that the purchasing power of the existing

²⁹ Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, p. 13. See below, p. 115 for further discussion of the horse trade during the Portuguese period.

³⁰ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 171-75; Subrahmanyam *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, p. 16.

³¹ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 155.

³² *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, pp. 99-101; *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, vol. I, p. 20.

³³ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 158.

³⁴ *Pardau* or *pardao* were gold and silver Portuguese coins worth between 300-360 *reis*. The *cruzado* was an ancient Portuguese gold coin worth 360 *Reis* in the fifteenth century, and 400 *reis* or 2 *ashrafi*s in the sixteenth century. During the seventeenth century the *cruzado* was roughly valued at 4 English shillings. See C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 387; Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, pp. 279, 281. See Table 2.3 below and the Glossary.

coinage used in Hormuz was much higher than their own, especially the *ashrafi* which circulated right across the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese therefore had to use indigenous coinage during their early commercial dealings in the Gulf and India, until they gradually introduced their own coins. In the second half of the sixteenth century Portuguese coins appear in the surviving revenue accounts of the customs of Hormuz, Bahrain, and Muscat.³⁵

However, the *ashrafi* can be a confusing currency for historians to work with. Two other types of *ashrafi* were used in Aden in the sixteenth century, worth about 360 Portuguese *reis* or three Portuguese *cruzados*.³⁶ It is also necessary to mention here that the gold *ashrafi* was used in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluk State from December 1425.³⁷ Egypt's role in the commerce between Europe and the East ensured that this coin was widely disseminated, even after the Portuguese impinged on the trade in pepper and other goods in the Indian Ocean. This remained the case even after the fall of the Mamluks.

On the other side of the Gulf, no gold coins were struck by Timur and his successors in Persia, but Persian Mongols struck *dīnārs* and half *dīnārs* in gold, which were used in the Islamic Abbasid period. They had mints at Baghdad, Basra, Shiraz and Kirmān, from which Hormuz might have drawn its supplies.

In addition to all of these high denomination coins, there were other types in circulation at Hormuz when the Portuguese arrived. *Larins*, for example, were made from silver and copper, and were coined at Lār on the Persian mainland, not far from Hormuz. These coins were afterwards known to Europe as *larins* or *laris*.³⁸ Trade was conducted with the *larin* all along the Gulf; eighty *larins* were worth one Persian

³⁵ T. Matos, *O Estado da Índia nos anos de 1581-1588* (Ponta Delgada, 1982), pp. 51-91; V. V. M. Godinho, *Les finances de l'état portugais des Indes Orientales (1517-1635)* (Paris, 1982), p. 48.

³⁶ *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, vol. I, p. 20.

³⁷ Ashtor, 'Spices Prices in the Near East in the fifteenth century', p. 69.

³⁸ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 142; Godinho, *Les finances de l'état portugais des Indes Orientales*, p. 49.

tūmān.³⁹ Linschoten described these *larins* (which he called *larynen*) during his voyage to Hormuz as the trade currency of the time. He adds, ‘these coins were brought to Hormuz in great quantities, whereby there is great dealing with them, as with other merchandises, because of the great gain that is gotten by them and in India they go very high’.⁴⁰ This coinage was used in all places on the Indian Ocean coast. It was used in Iraq also, especially in Basra, in the sixteenth century, alongside a coin called the *shahis* (*xays*).⁴¹

Tanga was a general name for a silver coin, with varying value, from the Indo-Muslim *tanka*. At that time the *tanga* of Goa was worth 60 Portuguese *reis*; that of Hormuz was about 62 or 69 *reis*.⁴²

All of this demonstrates that the value of the Portuguese *reis* was not the same in all eastern territories. It also indicates that the financial situation was more stable in Hormuz than other Indian Ocean countries, and that the purchasing power of the coinage was high.

Table 2.3. Coins in the Gulf during the Portuguese Period

Coin	Equivalent
Ashrafi/Xerafins	300 reis
Larin	60 reis (one-sixth of an ashrafi)
Cruzado	2 ashrafi
Pardo	1.55 ashrafi (360 reis)
Pataca	1.22 ashrafi
Tanga	62-69 reis at Hormuz.
Spanish Real	3.25 Abbasī
Tūmān	200 shāhis (10,000 silver dīnārs)
Shāhis	50 dīnārs
50 Abbasīs	1 tūmān
Mahmūdi	1 Abbasī

³⁹ *EI*, New ed., vol. VI, p. 790; J. B. Tavernier, *Travels in India* (London, 1889), vol. I, pp. 23-4, 414-15. During the period of Safavid rule, the Persian currency system was based on the *tūmān*, a unit of account whose value was fixed at the currently established weight of 10,000 silver dīnārs.

⁴⁰ *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten*, vol. I, p. 47-8.

⁴¹ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. I, pp. 23-4, 414. See also *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 30; Aubin, ‘Le Royaume d’Ormuz’, p. 142.

⁴² *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, vol. I, p. 20; *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 94.

On the other side of the Gulf, we know from Portuguese sources that Bahrain (Awāl) was the most significant port for the kingdom of Hormuz, especially for the king as it was one of his fiefs, and his commercial interests there were considerable.⁴³

From early Islamic times, Bahrain's prosperity depended on its harbour – this was the base of the pearl fleet – and on the excellent shelter and the abundance of fresh water and food on the island. All of these recommended it as a convenient staging post for ships bound from Iraq for India. Bahrain itself was also a natural terminus for maritime trade from Malacca and the Indonesian archipelago, because it was near the mainland province of Hajar on the Arabian Peninsula coast,⁴⁴ which at that time was well irrigated and accessible to trade routes from Nejd, Hejaz and the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ In addition, Bahrain had long been, and still remained, a leading centre of shipbuilding and seaborne commerce. Indeed, it outlasted some of its early rivals like Al-Ubullah and Sirāf.⁴⁶

Albuquerque, in a letter to Manuel I of October 1514, summarized the most important economic aspects in the islands. He wrote that he was very keen to occupy the islands 'Because Bahren [sic] is a great power and an area of great fortune, for it is rich in pearls.'⁴⁷ He added in another letter, dated September 1515, that 'Bahrain is as important as it could possibly be, for a great number of craft set forth thence for India loaded with a great number of horses and considerable quantities of pearls'.⁴⁸ Because

⁴³ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vi, pp. 311-12.

⁴⁴ In pre-Islamic and early Islamic times all the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula was called Al-Bahrain district with Hajar as its capital.

⁴⁵ A. K. Al-Shamlan, *Al-Melaha fi Meyah Al-Bahrain wa Al-Khlej Al-Arabi*, (Bahrain, 1995), p. 22.

⁴⁶ *Bahrain Through the Ages the History*, ed. A. Al-Kalifa and M. Rise (London and New York, 1993), p. 135.

⁴⁷ Busharb, 'Musahamat Al-Masadir wa Al-Wathaiq Al-Burtukāliyyah fi Kitabat Tarekh Al-Bahrain Kheilal Al-Nisf Al-Awwal Mian Al-Qarn Al-Sades Ashar', p. 121.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

of its high revenues and trade with India, the Portuguese quickly sought to control Bahrain, as Albuquerque had promised his king.⁴⁹

In view of its wealth and the revenues it guaranteed them, the kings of Hormuz regarded Bahrain with the utmost importance. In 1530 the vizier of Hormuz, Rashid Al-Muscati, estimated the yield of the islands at 15,000 *ashrafi*, while the king, Mohammed Shah II, estimated it at 40,000 *ashrafi*.⁵⁰ It seems that the king's estimate was the more accurate of the two. According to Table 2.2 above, Bahrain and Qatîf's pearl fishery alone in 1500 was worth 28,200 *ashrafi*.

Beyond its importance as a market centre, Bahrain also derived revenue from the export of two local commodities: excellent dates, which represented the island's principal wealth, and pearls, which were fished there in quantity.⁵¹ Bahrain was indeed 'rich in pearls', as Albuquerque noted. Not only that, but Bahrain was famous for the quality of its pearls which were generally whiter and rounder than those from anywhere else.⁵² The value of the islands' yearly trade, in pearls and seed pearls was 'five hundred thousand *cruzados*; to say nothing of a hundred thousand more which may represent those smuggled away, for fear of the vizier's extortions.'⁵³ For these reasons, Bahrain often attracted the attention of its strongest neighbors, and especially Hormuz.⁵⁴

The chief pearl markets for a long time, and even in the Portuguese period, were Al-Manama, on Bahrain island, for the Arabian part of the Gulf, and Hormuz for the Persian part. En route to the markets of India, nearly all of the pearls passed through the hands of wealthy Arab merchants residing on Hormuz Island or Lengah and Qays on

⁴⁹ See above, Section 1.4.

⁵⁰ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, p. 325, vol. IV, p. 158.

⁵¹ *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, vol. I, p. 20; *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 177.

⁵² *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, vol. I, p. 20.

⁵³ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 177.

⁵⁴ D. Potache, 'The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century', *Studia*, 48 (1989), pp. 146-47.

the Persian side.⁵⁵ Ceylon pearls were also traded on the Indian market, especially at Calicut.⁵⁶

If pearls were the most important source of revenue in the Gulf, the horse trade came a close second. The horses exported from the Gulf to India and brought from the Arabian Peninsula and Persia were of three types. The first were 'pure gems' and sold for gold *pardoas*; the second were those that collapsed on the journey;⁵⁷ the third were for ceremonial purposes. Barbosa provides an account of the horse trade during the early period of Portuguese contact in the Gulf. He reports that 'Every year they used to take one or two thousand horses, and each one of these is worth in India three or four hundred *cruzados*'.⁵⁸ When the ruler of Al-Juboor extended his rule to Al-Hasa and Qatif, his control of the horse and camel trades had serious repercussions for the economy of Hormuz.⁵⁹

Portuguese sources mention that there were several places in Oman and Bahrain notable for horse breeding and their preparation for export to India,⁶⁰ where, because of local wars, there was high demand and good prices.⁶¹ Inevitably, this valuable trade attracted the attention of the Portuguese – and control of it was one motivation for their drive towards the domination of Bahrain and the destruction of Al-Juboor.⁶²

⁵⁵ Constable and Stiffe, *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁶ J. H. Ryley, *Ralph Fitch England's Pioneer to India and Burma* (London, 1899), p. 54.

⁵⁷ *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, vol. I, ed. A. S. Rego (Lisbon, 1962), pp. 92-3, 214-15. Horses suffered greatly on the voyage to India, because of the cramped conditions on board ship and because they were often underfed and insufficiently watered. See F. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 363.

⁵⁸ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, vol. I, p. 92.

⁵⁹ A. Ibn Basam, 'Tohfah Al-Mushtaq fi Akhbar Najid wa Al-hejaz wa Al-Iraq', pp. 67-8. See Section 1.2, above.

⁶⁰ The Deccan was the most important purchaser of horses of the Gulf, especially the Muslim kingdom of Gujarat. Some of these horses came from Baghdad. Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 168-69.

⁶¹ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. 83, 86; *The Book of Duarte Barbos*, vol. I, p. 70.

⁶² Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', pp. 117-18, 121.

Other goods traded in Bahrain were fruit, such as pomegranates, peaches and figs, and various kinds of vegetables. Barros likened Bahrain in this respect to the Iberian Peninsula, a prolific producer of such produce.⁶³ Bahrain's revenue from agriculture was very high in the sixteenth century, as we know from Teixeira's *Travels*.⁶⁴

In view of its commercial importance, the commander of the first Portuguese campaign against Bahrain in 1521 permitted his soldiers to sack the town, but forbade them to touch the goods of the traders who had fled to Qatîf. He did this in order to encourage merchants to return to Bahrain and restore the island to its former commercial importance.⁶⁵ This incident demonstrates very clearly that rule of the island was never an end in itself to the Portuguese; stripped of its commercial activity, Bahrain, like any other trade centre in the Gulf, would have been worth nothing to them. To get the most out of Bahrain, the Portuguese captain of Hormuz, on his own initiative it seems, sent a commercial representative to supervise transactions there for the benefit of the Portuguese.⁶⁶ In view of the island's strategic and commercial importance, after their invasion in 1521 the Portuguese strove to ensure that Bahrain did not fall into hostile hands, especially the tribes of Al-Hasa.

The importance of Qatîf in this period was similar to that of the Bahrain islands.⁶⁷ This was because Qatîf was the best bridge between the Gulf and Hejaz on the Red Sea coast. Any power that took Bahrain could capture Qatîf.

During Al-Juboor's domination of Bahrain and Qatîf, which lasted more than fifty years, trade in the two ports reached a peak, as recorded in many contemporary

⁶³ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, liv. vi, pp. 316-17.

⁶⁴ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 177.

⁶⁵ Corriea, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 648-49.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Qatîf was at that time a notable centre for the manufacture of cotton fabrics. Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 100.

sources.⁶⁸ Their prosperity continued until the Portuguese entered the Gulf – in 1514 Albuquerque himself noted that ‘the islands are very rich’⁶⁹ – and Al-Juboor’s successful stewardship of the islands earned them the enmity of Hormuz as potential rivals. Hormuz tried on several occasions to prevent Al-Juboor trade from passing through the Strait of Hormuz, causing Al-Juboor to transport horses for Indian markets through Dofar on the south coast of Oman.⁷⁰ This also damaged the horse trade through the port of Hormuz.

Other islands in the Gulf had a more clearly strategic function. Kharg, for example, guarded the entrance to the Shatt-Al-Arab waterway in the Gulf’s interior. Qishm was the major supplier of agricultural products to feed Hormuz itself. Therefore when it was occupied by the Persians at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Hormuz suffered accordingly.⁷¹

Basra, a river port at the head of the Gulf, was also notable for its commerce. It was an important meeting point of the overland caravan trade between the Mediterranean and the Gulf.⁷² Indeed, the Basra-Baghdad route was one of the main alternatives to the Portuguese *Carreira*. From Basra, merchandise went to Baghdad, and from there to Turkey and Kirmān in Persia because it was the main route of the silk trade.⁷³ In the early sixteenth century Basra enjoyed considerable trade with India. Numerous goods converged there, such as dates from the oases of Al-Hasa or Qatīf,⁷⁴ and Bahraini

⁶⁸ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 188; S. Ibn Majid, *Āl-Fawā'id fi Usūl ilm Āl-bahr wa' Āl-qawā'd*, pp. 301-02.

⁶⁹ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. IV, p. 187.

⁷⁰ A. Al-Humaidān ‘Al-Tarekh Al-Siāsī Li Al-Juboor’, p. 61. See Map II.

⁷¹ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, p. 15.

⁷² F. G. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring* (New Jersey, 1995), p. 64.

⁷³ F. Castro, *Crônica do Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, pp. 365-67.

⁷⁴ Basra was one of the largest producers of dates. The best kinds, which were well known, were the *Khulas* and *Mirziban*. These were exported to India, Egypt and Europe. Dates were grown in Basra from Kurna to Fāo along both sides of Shat-Al-Arab, as described in 1563 in the *carta* of Simão da Costa, the Governor of Goa. ANTT, *A. G.* vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, pp.140-41.

pearls. In addition, bows and hooks were brought along by the Shiraz and Lâr caravans,⁷⁵ as well as silk, rugs, woollen cloth, wool, gold and silver-woven materials, taffeta and damask from Damascus and Aleppo, and European textiles.⁷⁶ Also, salt from the salt-works operating near the city, rice, wheat, barley, rye, butter and cloths made out of wool and of camel hair, soap and iron were all brought by the Bedouins.⁷⁷

In common with Hormuz, among the diverse goods exported from Basra were horses. About 600 to 800 horses each year were conveyed directly from Basra to Goa.⁷⁸ The Portuguese realised that horses, as well as other goods, accounted for a large share of Basra's customs, so they attempted several times to reach the port. The first military attempt was made by Behchior Tavares de Sousa in 1529, but he was not the first Portuguese to reach Basra.⁷⁹

It is necessary here to discuss those taxes levied in Basra during the sixteenth century which are mentioned in Portuguese documents. To take 1563 as an example, 10 per cent was levied on spices and fabrics which came into the city, and 11 per cent on goods which were re-exported from Basra to Baghdad. The authorities in Baghdad levied 21 per cent on the goods exported from Baghdad to Aleppo.⁸⁰ Taxes were increasing on these routes, mainly because the political position was not stable in the territories between Basra and Baghdad during Turkish rule, in particular to the south of Basra where the resident Arabs often carried out actions against the Ottoman army.⁸¹ In addition, bandits were a serious danger to caravans operating between Baghdad and Aleppo. This situation raised prices in parts of the Mediterranean which were supplied

⁷⁵ The Persian goods were conveyed from Persian harbours in small local ships called *markab* to Basra.

⁷⁶ H. Inalcik, 'The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspect of the Ottoman Economy', *SEHME* (London, 1970), pp. 209-13.

⁷⁷ Potache, 'The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century', p. 148.

⁷⁸ ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, June 23 1547, fl. 88, carta D. Manuel de Lima to D. João de Castro.

⁷⁹ See Chapter Three, section 2.

⁸⁰ ANTT, *A.G.* vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, p. 141.

⁸¹ A. Al-Humaidân 'Al-Tarekh Al-Siāsī Li Al-Juboor', p. 62.

by this route. As part of the traditional networks that operated between Basra and Goa, most of the trade carried out with Hormuz was brought from Basra by *tarrāda*, especially wheat and butter.⁸²

2.2 Portuguese Shipping and ‘Monopoly’ in the Gulf

By now it should be clear that most trade routes of the Gulf converged at Hormuz, and a great many others began there. During their initial contacts with the East, the Portuguese had little sound information about the Gulf’s commerce, or that of the Indian Ocean. Portugal obtained some intelligence indirectly from its contacts with the Italian trading cities;⁸³ and the report of Pêro Covilhã demonstrates a certain practical curiosity about the East, reflected also in the anecdotal evidence that could be garnered from accounts current in late medieval Europe. Specific details, however, were sparse. Hormuz and the extent of its trade links must have come as something of a surprise to the Portuguese. Indeed, the highly developed state of trade in the Indian Ocean might have been equally remarkable, far removed as it was from Portugal’s recent experience of West Africa.⁸⁴

It remains to be seen, however, if the Portuguese derived the full benefit from their conquest after 1515. Quite simply, did Hormuz continue to dominate the trade of the Gulf under Portuguese rule?

In discussing the Portuguese impact on the thriving, cosmopolitan and prosperous network of caravans and seaborne commerce in the East, we must first be aware of one simple fact. The trade of any port that came under Portuguese control was

⁸² ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, fl. 102, 126. Besides horses sent from Basra to Hormuz, the ruler of Basra had as a custom to send three horses each year: one for the king of Hormuz, the other two for the Portuguese captain of the fortress and for the vizier of Hormuz. Aubin, ‘Le Royaume d’Ormuz’, p. 164; Potache, ‘The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century’, p. 150.

⁸³ Musgrave, *The Early Modern European Economy*, p. 170.

⁸⁴ Magalhães, *The Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 19, 29.

notionally treated as a crown monopoly, pursued for its benefit or the benefit of its nominees.⁸⁵ A twenty per cent share, or *quinto*, of revenues was reserved for the king.⁸⁶ However, it must be emphasised that the gradual withdrawal of the crown from direct economic exploitation, accelerated after the Spanish Union of 1580, increasingly left the conduct of long-distance and intra-Asian trade in the hands of officials and private traders. The concession voyages allowed to captains were a manifestation of this transition, but, unlike Malacca and Bengal, little evidence survives for Hormuz and the Gulf.⁸⁷ Concession voyages (*viagens dos lugares*) were granted to private individuals and relatives of officers through royal licence to help compensate for the lack of tonnage available to the Portuguese crown to ship merchandise around the Indian Ocean.⁸⁸ In return for a licence, the grantee paid to the crown customs duties on his cargo and a percentage of his profits. In the second half of the sixteenth century the practice grew up of selling these voyages by auction. The chief profit from these voyages usually gained by charging freight on the goods that the ships carried and from the return on capital that they invested.⁸⁹ These voyages were quite distinct and organised separately from the *Carreira da Índia*, which provided the commercial link between the *Estado da Índia* and Portugal via Goa and Cochin, and more rarely, Malacca.⁹⁰

Having searched extensively in Matos and elsewhere, there is little evidence for concession voyages in Hormuz or the Gulf at large. Perhaps the Gulf routes were not

⁸⁵ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 48, 57.

⁸⁶ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 62.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 97, 114-5, 213, 232.

⁸⁸ Such as the voyage to Damão sold to Bernardo Francisco da Gama in 1599. See Matos, *O Estado da Índia*, p. 35, n. 104.

⁸⁹ For the system of *viagens dos lugares* see Matos, *O Estado da Índia*, pp. 30-40; Bocarro, *O Livro Das Plantas de Todas as Fortalezas, Cidades e Povoações do Estado da Índia Oriental*; Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*.

⁹⁰ Villiers, 'The Estado da India in South Asia', in *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 65.

suiting to this type of investment, since one voyage in 1599 cost 20,500 *ashrafi*.⁹¹ Other voyages, or rather circuits, however, were well known: from Mozambique to Sofala, Ceylon, the Moluccas, the Coromandel coast, and Malacca; from Pegu to Bengal; from Macau to Japan, Sunda, Patane and Timor; and from Malacca to Macau, Timor, Tenassarim, Cambodia, Sunda, Borneo, Macassar and Timor.⁹²

In addition to securing its wealth, the other main objective of the Portuguese in occupying Hormuz was to be in a position to observe Arab navigation in the Gulf and the Red Sea.⁹³ Moreover, the two harbours of Hormuz were secure and easily accessible, one for small vessels, the other for large ones. Strategically, Hormuz's situation at the gate of the Gulf corresponded to that of Gibraltar at the entrance to the Mediterranean; both held the key to the waters of the interior. Like Gibraltar, however, Hormuz was powerless in itself to prevent the passage of enemy ships because the width of the Strait was too great to be commanded by onshore guns. Only a fleet could properly close it off.⁹⁴ Perhaps Albuquerque realised at an early stage the need for naval forces and bases at strategic points.⁹⁵ Thus, several different squadrons patrolled the waters of the East, one of which was the high-seas fleet of the Straits of Hormuz and the Red Sea (*Armada de Alto Bordo*). This fleet was based in Muscat and served to prevent Arab attacks on the Indian coast and to keep the lines of communication open between India and the Gulf.⁹⁶ The Portuguese also equipped the fortress of Hormuz with around sixty cannon to defend the island.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Matos, *O Estado da India nos anos de 1581-1588*, p. 35. See below, p. 150 n. 60 for possible reference to such voyages in the Gulf.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 32-40.

⁹³ Baiao, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*, vol. II, p. 83.

⁹⁴ G. A., Ballard, 'The War of the Arabian Sea', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 11 (January 1925), p. 31. Compare with Lewis, 'Northern European Sea Power and the Strait of Gibraltar, 1031-1350', pp. 140-41.

⁹⁵ See Chapter One, section 4.

⁹⁶ C. Borges, 'The Portuguese and their Hormuz-entered Gulf Policy', p. 186.

⁹⁷ Ballard, 'The War of the Arabian Sea', p. 31.

Muscat, though outside of the Gulf proper, is worthy of further discussion. When the Portuguese arrived at the beginning of the sixteenth century Muscat had a measure of independence from Hormuz, but its tax revenues were remitted to the kingdom's treasury. The rebellion of 1521 was a signal to transfer the port to the Arab chieftain Rashid Al-Muscati, who had sided with the Portuguese.⁹⁸ However, the real project to detach Muscat from Hormuz began in 1543 when *alfândega* was granted to the king of Portugal.⁹⁹ Portugal's main motive in using and ultimately fortifying Muscat was to observe traffic passing the mouth of the Red Sea and to exert an influence on trade moving between there and the Sultanate of Atchen (or Atjeh).¹⁰⁰ Control of narrow straits was a key feature of Portuguese strategy, whether the Strait of Malacca or that of Bab Al-Mandab in the Red Sea: the latter became a priority after the rise of Atchen which increased Portuguese awareness of the potential economic threat from Muslim states in the Indian Ocean.¹⁰¹ Any Portuguese squadron dispatched to the Gulf or to intercept and capture ships without cartazes needed a rest station en route, and Muscat was the ideal location.¹⁰² By the mid-1530s, Muscat also served as a much more convenient base than Hormuz for countering the Ottoman threat in the Red Sea. Muscat therefore operated in conjunction with Hormuz and its satellite stations, to which we must now return.

Despite these measures, it seems that after Albuquerque's death the Portuguese neglected the simple requirement for regular patrols of the Strait of Hormuz. They can count themselves fortunate that the first real breach of these lax defences occurred only

⁹⁸ See below, pp. 151-2 180.

⁹⁹ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. V, liv. x, p. 126.

¹⁰⁰ See below, p. 188.

¹⁰¹ For more details about these events, see C. Boxer, 'A note on Portuguese Reactions to the Revival of the Red Sea Spice trade and the Rise of Atjeh, 1540-1600' in M. Pearson, ed., *Spices in the Indian Ocean World*, pp. 269-82.

¹⁰² See the importance of the port of Muscat in *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. 1. p. 83; and for the struggle between Atchens and the Portuguese on the trade route from Malacca and the Red Sea, Couto, *Décadas*, vols. IV, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X.

in 1552 when Turkish vessels entered the Gulf. Neither Portuguese warships on station at Hormuz nor gunfire from the fortress could prevent them from attacking the island.¹⁰³

Not only, on occasion, was Portuguese seapower poorly deployed, but in their initial forays into the Indian Ocean they also showed a lack of foresight by stealing almost as much as they traded. For example, the Hormuzian merchants never forgot that in April 1504 the Portuguese stole a ship belonging to them near the Malabar Coast. In September 1505 they attacked and destroyed some fishing boats near the Gulf of Oman, and looted all the goods they were carrying. They also attacked trade ships carrying Arab horses to India near the Gulf. Lorenzo, the son of Almeida, attacked seven ships belonging to Hormuz in the waters near Chaul, stole all the horses and burnt the vessels.¹⁰⁴ In 1509, the Portuguese looted a ship belonging to Al-Juboor in Gulf waters, which was sailing from Bahrain on its way to India carrying a large and valuable cargo of pearls.¹⁰⁵ Such early encounters were an unlikely prelude to the peaceful insertion of Portugal into the commerce of the Indian Ocean.

Heavy-handed behaviour of this type had several different effects. Many vessels that had customarily loaded at Hormuz stopped going there out of fear, especially during Albuquerque's governorship.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, Hormuz lost much of the revenue from which its king paid the Portuguese their tribute.¹⁰⁷ From Hormuz the Portuguese used force to control the flow of Muslim shipping, the restriction, by license, of maritime traffic to India being an obvious example. Merchants from Iraq or Persia were compelled as a result to travel over land through Qandāhār in Afghanistan,¹⁰⁸ which was hardly in the best interests of Portuguese revenues. At the same time, however, the

¹⁰³ See Chapter Four, section 2.

¹⁰⁴ Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁵ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, pp. 126-28.

¹⁰⁶ The revenue of the customs of Hormuz in 1515 was only 100,000 *ashrafi*. See Table 2.2, above.

¹⁰⁷ Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. II, liv. iv, pp. 378-79.

¹⁰⁸ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. I, p. 193.

Portuguese authorities could not completely close the Gulf to Muslim traders, even if they had wanted to. Control of the western side of the Gulf was always weaker than the eastern side, largely because the Portuguese inherited the existing political weaknesses of Hormuz. The regulation of traffic was also influenced by the need to keep on good terms with Persia as a counterbalance to the Turks.

Efforts to control the flow of shipping through the Gulf were not the only obstacles to commercial growth. The 11 per cent tax on most goods travelling through Hormuz was considered a dear price to pay. This levy, which can be traced back to the fifteenth century, was still in operation in the sixteenth century and the Portuguese did nothing to change it.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the direct route was the most profitable for the conveyance of goods, namely horses and spices.

These, then, were some of the factors which initially retarded the prosperity of Hormuz after its occupation by the Portuguese. More important still was the continued leakage of spices through the Red Sea route, which was never entirely closed by the Portuguese for any length of time. After an initial decline in the volume of spices shipped by this traditional route (though even in 1510-11 the Egyptian chronicler Ibn Ayas noted the arrival of about ten cargo ships at Suez from India¹¹⁰), from the early 1530s shipments to Venice from Alexandria, Istanbul, and the Anatolian ports increased sharply again.¹¹¹ By the 1540s it must have been clear that the *cartaz* system could neither prevent pilgrimage – itself an economic activity¹¹² – nor Indian trade, especially from Gujarat, with around sixty vessels making the voyage in 1547 alone. Indian traffic

¹⁰⁹ The tax varied from one port to another. The small ships of Basra which brought in butter and cereals paid 11 per cent while those of *Raysahr*, the principal port of the Safavids, paid just 5 per cent, ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, fl. 126; Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 172.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Ayas, *Bad'a Al-Zuhur fi W'aqi Al-Duhur*, vol. 4, p. 185.

¹¹¹ H. V. Der Wee, 'Structural change in Europe long-distance trade, and particularly in the re-export trade from south to north, 1350-1750', in J. Tracy, (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empire* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 30.

¹¹² See M.N. Pearson, 'The Estado da Índia and the Hajj', *Indica* (March-September, 1989), pp. 105-15.

was still passing through the Bab-Al Mandeb in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.¹¹³

It could therefore be argued that the discovery of the Cape route did not affect the trade of Hormuz or the Gulf routes to the Indian Ocean, as much as it affected Mamluk trade and the decline and final disappearance of the *Kārimī* trade in the Red Sea.¹¹⁴

Portugal's operations in the Gulf, as elsewhere, were also hampered by the two related shortages of shipping and manpower. The tonnage available to the Portuguese in the Gulf was modest. In 1525 there were just over eighty Portuguese vessels of various descriptions working in Asia, eleven of which were private ships deployed on the Cape route. Only three *naus* of the eleven serviced Hormuz in carrying cargoes which arrived there.¹¹⁵ This was a sad decline from the busy harbour noted by Varthema in the early sixteenth century.¹¹⁶ The city's Portuguese authorities routinely turned a blind eye to vessels coming from India and passing through the Gulf. They realised that it was not practicable to transfer all commerce to the Cape; on the contrary, the Gulf routes were still held to have a useful purpose. For these reasons, the Portuguese at Hormuz had to negotiate their transactions through Muslim merchants and allow Muslim ships to carry on their business as before, albeit under the supervision and inspection of officials in the ports of the Gulf and the coast of Oman, and with the *cartaz* system.¹¹⁷

Governing the pattern of trade in the Gulf was a central feature of Portuguese policy there. The reverse side of this coin was the attempt to tighten up procedures and revenue producing levies in Hormuz itself. The first important step in this direction was

¹¹³ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, pp. 90-1.

¹¹⁴ W. J. Fischel, 'The Spices trade in the Mamluk Egypt' in M. Pearson, (ed.), *Spices in the Indian Ocean World*, p. 67.

¹¹⁵ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 75.

¹¹⁶ See above p.55.

¹¹⁷ Borges, 'The Portuguese and their Hormuz centred Gulf Policy', p. 175.

taken in 1521 with the replacement of all native personnel in the customs house with European officials, an act which gave rise to the first rebellion against the Portuguese presence in the region.¹¹⁸ The next step on the path to strict monopoly of Hormuz's commercial activities was the seizure, in 1543, of the *alfândega* on the pretext that the king had defaulted on the payment of tribute. The *alfândega* were fully and directly integrated into the tax system of Portugal.¹¹⁹ In effect, the Portuguese forced the king to hand over all of his customs income for the year 1543.¹²⁰ It seems that with this increasing emphasis on the taxation of transit trade the Portuguese were less concerned with projecting their naval power across the Strait of Hormuz. This might seem an odd shift of policy in the face of mounting Ottoman pressure around the Gulf; yet in spite of the superficial hostility between the Portuguese and the Turks, the former took advantage of the situation by turning Hormuz into a staple market for oriental goods intended for the Ottoman territories.¹²¹

The short-sightedness of this policy was revealed by the Turkish occupation of Basra in 1546. With direct trade to India as an objective, and Hormuz as the principal obstacle, conflict between the Turks and the Portuguese was almost inevitable. Tribes friendly to the Portuguese informed them that the Turks intended to build a fortress at the mouth of Basra, in Kurna (Carná).¹²² The occupation of Basra and the possibility for direct Turkish commerce with India became matters of increasing concern to the Portuguese in 1541.¹²³ Not only that, but the important horse trade between Basra and Hormuz began to slow down. This is probably because the Turks absorbed much of the available stock for their own use, and perhaps exported the remainder by the mainland

¹¹⁸ See below, section 2.3 and Chapter Four, section 1.

¹¹⁹ Godinho, *Les Finances de L' état Portugais*, pp. 44-7.

¹²⁰ *DUP*, vol. I, pp. 201, 215.

¹²¹ Van der Wee, 'Structural change in Europe long-distance trade', pp. 31-2.

¹²² For the letter from bin Ūlyaan to the captain of Hormuz, see D. Castro, *Crônica do Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, pp. 359-60.

¹²³ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 450.

route to Al-Hasa and Oman. Bastião Lopez Lobato, the factor at Hormuz in the period 1545-47, advised the viceroy that if he wanted horses he should let Portuguese ships go to do business with merchants of Basra.¹²⁴ He was not saying this on his own account, but because circumstances sometimes forced the Turks and the Portuguese to forget their differences and do business with each other. On the one hand, the Turks wanted access to the products of India and the Far East, and the trade routes to remain open. On the other hand, the Portuguese needed food, in particular grain from southern Iraq, to feed their troops in Hormuz.¹²⁵ Annually the Portuguese delivered 3,000 yards of pepper to Basra, in exchange for which the Turks supplied 1,000 quintals of wheat.¹²⁶ In addition, Portuguese officials at Hormuz usually ignored trade bound for Basra in exchange for the payment of bribes.¹²⁷

Such agreements demonstrate that the rift between the two powers was not insurmountable. For several reasons the Turks seem to have been more willing to compromise than the Portuguese after the campaign of 1559.¹²⁸ The occupation of Basra was costly; there were problems with the neighbouring Arab tribes; and there was the strategic reality that Portuguese Hormuz ultimately controlled seaborne trade through the Gulf.¹²⁹ Judging from the impact of Turkish diplomatic overtures to officials in Hormuz and India, the Portuguese were less willing to negotiate. Already well established in the Gulf's traditional networks, they were loathe to sign an agreement

¹²⁴ Potache, 'The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century', p. 149.

¹²⁵ Süleyman *the Magnificent and his Age*, ed. M. Kunt and C. Woodhead (London and New York, 1995), p. 62; Castro, *Crônica do Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, p. 368.

¹²⁶ V. Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, vol. 2, p. 162.

¹²⁷ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 196. Luis Falcão, captain of Hormuz in the period 1545-47, gave permission for certain *terradas* to go with their merchandise to Basra when it was under Turkish authority. *Cart. Ormuz*, fls. 88r-92r.

¹²⁸ See Chapter Four, section 2.

¹²⁹ L. Albuquerque, *Cartas de D. Joo de Castro a D. III*, p. 121.

with their enemies, especially as they knew that the Turks needed wood from India to use in their shipbuilding yard in Basra.¹³⁰

In reality, at least in the short term, vessels carrying pepper and other goods from India still reached Basra without being stopped in Hormuz, confirming that Portuguese control of the Strait of Hormuz was incomplete.¹³¹ The Portuguese continued to struggle against their chronic shortage of money, because a sizeable proportion of the revenue from the commerce between Basra and Goa slipped away from them. As for the Turks, political instability in southern Iraq and the resumption of hostilities against the Persians, as well as their campaigns in the Mediterranean, did not allow them to launch a major offensive in the Gulf. Turkish objectives being modest, they were prepared initially to put up with Portuguese policy.¹³²

During the last quarter of the sixteenth century Portugal's main preoccupation in the Gulf was Persia, first as ally, then as enemy. Both guises had economic implications for Hormuz. In the early 1580s Philip II perceived that a revival of the trade route via Persia to India would have a negative impact on the horse trade and perhaps on the trade in other Indian goods in the future. Therefore in 1581 he ordered the viceroy, Francisco de Gama, to instruct António de Lima, as ambassador to Hormuz, to sabotage the close ties between Shah Abbas, the Turks and the Moguls.¹³³ Philip also wanted him [de Lima] to bring peace between the king of Hormuz and his own finance auditor, and to prevent the Armenians and the Venetians from gaining a foothold in Hormuz. There was need for a *corrector-mor* ('chief corrector') for horses at Hormuz, a man competent and faithful, but not a Muslim or a vassal of the king of Hormuz because he trusted

¹³⁰ ANTT, *A.G.* vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, p. 142.

¹³¹ ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, 2 February 1546 fl. 50. Letter of Rafael Lobo to João de Castro. He notes that a number of *naos* which went to Qatif, Bahrain and Basra did not stop at Hormuz.

¹³² Potache, 'The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century', pp. 160-61.

¹³³ *DRI*, vol. I, p. 55.

neither.¹³⁴ In 1595 Viceroy Mathias de Albuquerque was still keeping an eye on Hormuz in response to the threat posed by Shah Abbas. Moreover, for some years there had been a fall in income from the horse trade between Hormuz and Canara and Cochin.¹³⁵

In the early 1600s Philip III tackled the same problems rather differently. Rather than suppressing the activities of Armenian traders, he decreed that they should pay customs dues at Hormuz if they acted as intermediaries between the Turks and the Persians. More than that, he sent a royal decree to the viceroy of India indicating his acceptance of Shah Abbas's suggestion that the silk trade of his kingdom should pass through Hormuz. At least trade passing through Hormuz could be taxed.

The fall of Bahrain to Persia in 1602 escalated the economic crisis in the Gulf and severely compromised Portugal's strategic position there. If the capture of Basra in 1546 by the Turks affected part of Portugal's Gulf income, then in comparison the loss of Bahrain reduced by a third the trade and revenues of the region. The king of the Union realised this. In 1605 he ordered Viceroy Martim Afonso de Castro to use peaceful means to persuade the Shah of Persia to relinquish Bahrain. He recommended that the viceroy should keep in touch with Luis Pereira de Lacerda, the envoy to Persia, and instruct him to exert pressure on the Shah to send an ambassador to Goa. Such was the effect of losing Bahrain on the Portuguese position that the king again wrote to Abbas, asking him to order the Sultan of Shiraz to hand over the island to the king of Hormuz.¹³⁶ In the event these efforts were unsuccessful, as we will see in Chapters Four and Five.

¹³⁴ *Livro das Monções*, vol. I, pp. 56, 171.

¹³⁵ Borges, 'The Portuguese and their Hormuz-entered Gulf Policy', p. 177.

¹³⁶ *Livro das Monções*, vol. I, pp. 105-06.

2.3. Economic Aspects of the Gulf during the Portuguese Domination

After the initial disruption of the Portuguese conquests described above, more peaceful conditions in the region brought renewed prosperity. Lopo Soares de Albergaria, governor of India in the period 1515-18, moved away from the policy of armed violence so characteristic of Albuquerque's time, and for a while commercial activity in the Gulf increased as a result. The trade in horses is a good example. The Arabian and Persian horse trade with India was lucrative before the Portuguese arrived in the Gulf, but expanded further after 1521. Animals traded between India and Persia, Basra, and the Arabian Peninsula were exported mainly through Hormuz,¹³⁷ though small-scale trade could also be found in other ports such as Dohfar, on the south coast of the Arabian Peninsula. These other outlets flourished when Arab tribes such as Al-Juboor extended their political and economic authority over the inland caravan routes. Nonetheless, large numbers of Gulf horses were shipped from Hormuz to Gujarat, for example.¹³⁸ The Portuguese re-exported some of these animals from Dabhol in India to South Asia, as Muslim merchants had done before them.¹³⁹

In spite of Portugal's important role as an exporter of horses from the Gulf after 1521, the control of supply remained firmly in the hands of dealers, brokers and merchants in Persia, southern Iraq and on the Arabian Peninsula. It must not be forgotten that the balance of power rested largely with the suppliers. What the Portuguese did to demonstrate their 'control' of the trade was to increase taxes and the price of horses on the Indian markets. According to Meilink-Roelofez, the Portuguese used Hormuz to trans-ship 'strategic commodities' like horses – and firearms – to southern India, and in particular to the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar which was usually in conflict with the Muslim kings and sultans of the Malabar coast and

¹³⁷ Boxer, *The Portuguese seaborne Empire 1415-1825*, pp. 40-41. For the carriage of horses by sea, see V. Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, pp. 78, 336-37 n. 173.

¹³⁸ Pires, *Suma Oriental*, vol. I, p. 43, vol. II, p. 270.

¹³⁹ Leur, *Indonesian trade and society*, p. 381.

Deccan.¹⁴⁰ Under Soares and his successor Sequeira, by 1523 the customs receipts in Goa from the horse trade stood at 36,000 *ashrafi*, and by 1540 had increased again to 126,000 *ashrafi*.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Lopo Soares himself came to rely on the profits of trade – ‘the authority of the state loosens, and private trade is widely tolerated’.¹⁴²

In pitting central authority so squarely against private initiative, and implying that one prospered at the expense of the other, this observation misreads the commercial administration of the Portuguese Gulf. The contradiction between private trade and fee farming is illusory.¹⁴³ Revenue collection was institutionalised in the farming out of captaincies by the crown. Usually the importance and wealth of each fortress determined the recipient. The conditions under which captaincies were granted and the size of their emoluments likewise varied considerably from one fortress to another, to the extent that there were waiting lists for the most lucrative positions.¹⁴⁴ Presumably Hormuz was no exception. In 1614, when Philip III explicitly ordered the sale of offices by *alvará*,¹⁴⁵ the city-kingdom was valued at 145,000 *ashrafi* for a three-year term, presumably because of the volume of trade that passed through it, and the associated potential for tax income. This price tag made Hormuz by far the most expensive captaincy in the region, some way ahead of Diu, Daman, Chaul, and Malacca, which ranged between 30,000 and 50,000 *ashrafi*.

¹⁴⁰ Meilink-Roelofez, *Asian Trade and European influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, p. 357 n. 22; Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825*, pp. 46, 62.

¹⁴¹ It is recorded that in 1520 three horses from Hormuz were sold in Goa for 1,550 *ashrafi*. Shortly before 1600 every horse exported to India via Hormuz cost the exporter 13,333 *ashrafi*, of which 6,500 was custom for the king. See *DUP*, vol. II, p. 113; B. S. Shastry, ‘A century of Sea Trade between Portuguese Goa and Hormuz’, *Al-watheekah*, 22 (Bahrain, 1993), p. 216.

¹⁴² Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*, p. 104.

¹⁴³ See R. F. Barendse, *The Arabian Seas: The Indian Ocean World of the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2002), p. 361.

¹⁴⁴ Matos, *O Estado da Índia*, pp. 17-8. Boxer cites the example of Mombassa as related by Couto. *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825* (London, 1969), pp. 298-299.

¹⁴⁵ *APO*, no. 353, fasc. 6 (Goa, 1875), as cited in *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, trans. A. Gray (London, 1888), vol. I, p. xxxii.

The *feitoria* of Hormuz likewise cost more to farm than any other in the Portuguese East (11,550 *ashrafi* in 1614).¹⁴⁶ The post of *feitor* was generally given, like the captaincy, to those already employed by the crown or in active service. The importance of this position came from the large number of duties connected with navigation and shipping, such as the provision of naval stores and equipment, victuals and armaments, arranging for caulking and minor repairs to ships, furnishing vessels for the loading and unloading of cargo, and supplying boxes and bags for the packing of goods.¹⁴⁷

The privatisation of the major captaincies, a process most conspicuous in the seventeenth century, had important implications for the formation and execution of policy at local level. Given the large sums required to purchase a captaincy, especially Hormuz, we must assume that recovering the investment was the incumbent's chief priority, whether by exercising crown monopolies or other less scrutable means. With the promise of a healthy financial return came some latitude for handling affairs as captains saw fit, and this surely explains some of the different strategies of commercial administration that we can glimpse or imply in the Gulf.

In the case of an important staple like Hormuz, the encouragement of peaceful trade was, theoretically, the most obvious method of raising and increasing revenue. Success depended on numerous variables, however, many of which were beyond local control. It will be seen below that political instability elsewhere in the Gulf could damage Hormuz's trade.¹⁴⁸ One quite understandable response to uncertain earnings was to increase the taxes on transit trade, and this evidently happened at Hormuz on a number of occasions. Direct Portuguese control of the kingdom's customs system from

¹⁴⁶ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 155.

¹⁴⁷ Matos, *O Estado da Índia*, p. 20.

¹⁴⁸ See below, pp. 127-8.

1543 brought with it a proliferation of duties.¹⁴⁹ By the early seventeenth century, the unprecedented annual customs revenues of Hormuz were in part due to higher taxes – indeed, the burdens of taxation increased not only in Hormuz but also in other ports which were subject to Portuguese authority. Taxes were levied even on collectors of cow dung.¹⁵⁰ In 1608, a one per cent tax was collected for the captain Garcia de Melo.¹⁵¹

Yet rapacity in the form of excessive taxation might have discouraged merchants from passing through Hormuz, and led to the haemorrhaging of goods via alternative routes. In December 1566, viceroy Antao de Noronha wrote from Goa to the crown stating that 20-25,000 quintals of pepper were reaching the Red Sea annually in Atjehnese and other Muslim ships, whereas Portuguese Indiamen were carrying only 10-12,000 on the Cape route back to Lisbon.¹⁵² Thirty years later a Turkish merchant by the name of Khwaja Rayoan observed that the mainland route from Venice and the Mediterranean via Persia and Kandahar continued uninterrupted in spite of the threat contrived by the Portuguese.¹⁵³ In this event, the stricter enforcement of *cartazes* might have brought back some of the recalcitrant, but at the cost of more frequent naval patrols and a souring of relations with the Gulf's merchants. The overland routes, of course, were beyond the Portuguese orbit. These hypothetical situations, requiring very fine judgements, must have been played out in practice by those men who took on the burden of a captaincy.

Matters were exacerbated by the ever-present spectre of administrative malpractice. Here arose cultural differences between Arabs and Europeans in the

¹⁴⁹ See below, pp. 129-30.

¹⁵⁰ G. W. F. Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs 1511-1574* (Philadelphia, 1977), p. 15.

¹⁵¹ BNL-FG, codice no. 1975, Carta de Ruy Lourenço de Távora para Filipe II (1610), fls. 366-66v.

¹⁵² Cited by Boxer in 'A note on Portuguese Reactions to the Revival of the Red Sea Spice trade and the Rise of Atjeh, 1540-1600' p. 273, no. 18, from A. da Silva Rego, ed. *Documentacao para a Historia das missoes do Padroado Portugues do Oriente India*, vol. X, 1566-1568, pp. 57-58, 160, 163.

¹⁵³ Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, pp. 162, 391 n. 21.

conduct of business. From a local, native perspective the authority ceded to the European captains and their subordinates, who were often relatives, was thought to be the source of much abuse. Economic activities in the kingdom of Hormuz had been very strictly regulated before the Portuguese arrived. Any cheating with scales and measurements, or any violation of royal orders was severely punished. Under the Portuguese, cheating, waste and falsification of information about the income from *alfândega* were widespread. Indeed, it is revealing that one captain of Hormuz, to cover his own corruption, complained to his own sovereign that the king of Hormuz did not pay the tribute due.¹⁵⁴ However, ‘corruption’ is a rather loaded word to use in this context.¹⁵⁵ Undoubtedly some Portuguese officials, perhaps the majority, pushed the possibilities of office beyond what was legally acceptable. Simão de Mello is both unsavoury and revealing in this respect: having been appointed captain of Hormuz a year before the city’s fall, de Mello demanded of the English besiegers that he be allowed to leave the city unmolested with six chests full of loot.¹⁵⁶ Boxer recounts a claim made by Álvaro de Noronha, captain of Hormuz in 1551, that as a matter of family pride he would surpass the 140,000 *pardaus* made by his predecessor (Manuel de Lima) during his term. Boxer was surely correct in concluding that ‘rigidly honest [officials] were few and far between’;¹⁵⁷ but some attempt should be made to distinguish between officials who were successful entrepreneurs and those who abused their authority systematically.

Most of the malpractice that occurred in the port and customs house under Portuguese control was petty, usually perquisites demanded by officials from merchants

¹⁵⁴ ANTT, *A.G.* vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, Carta de Cristóvão de Mendonça a el-rei D. João III, na qual lhe conta os acontecimentos e inimizades da Índia e o Estado da fortaleza, pp. 255-57.

¹⁵⁵ For interesting discussion see R.J. Barendse, *The Arabian Seas: The Indian Ocean World of the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2002), pp. 299-301.

¹⁵⁶ Another example was Manuel de Sousa in 1592. *The Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 168; *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁷ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 323.

and shippers.¹⁵⁸ For example, the ruler of Basra had to send a horse each year to the captain of the Portuguese fortress in Hormuz as a gift (or bribe).¹⁵⁹ In 1596 it was reported that horse exporters were forced to use boats that were too small, and to trade with the captain before any other.¹⁶⁰ As a royal monopoly, the horse trade was something of a special case. Elsewhere it was alleged that the captain compelled merchants from Basra to purchase 200 *ashrafi* worth of goods from his own factory at prices 15 per cent above the market price for every 2,000 *ashrafi* they invested. The captain also claimed 450 *reis* for every bale of indigo or quintal of cloves or other drugs that were exported.¹⁶¹ By 1603 corruption had reached such proportions that even the guardians of the royal interests converted themselves into thieves of crown property. The Portuguese *alcaide* of the sea, who had been appointed to prevent such robberies in Hormuz, merely joined hands with the *shahbandar*¹⁶² to share in the spoils.¹⁶³

Finally, Linschoten describes very clearly how Portuguese officials and private traders employed all possible means to get the most out of the Persian, Turkish, Arab, Armenian and Venetian merchants who visited Hormuz to buy spices. The captain's private commercial interests were satisfied first because, as Linschoten observed, 'the king is farre from them, to commuand the contrarie'.¹⁶⁴

More serious, perhaps, were instances of abuse involving the kings of Hormuz. Over the whole period of the occupation, the kings and viziers of Hormuz complained

¹⁵⁸ See also R. Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 174.

¹⁵⁹ Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz', p. 164; Potache, 'The Commercial Relations between Basrah and Goa in the Sixteenth Century', p. 150.

¹⁶⁰ *APO*, fasc. III, pp. 711-14.

¹⁶¹ *DUP*, vol. II, pp. 43-4.

¹⁶² See the Glossary.

¹⁶³ Shastri, 'A century of Sea Trade between Portuguese Goa and Hormuz', p. 207.

¹⁶⁴ *The Voyage of Van Linschoten*, vol. I, pp. 40-1. He did concede that the captain alone could send horses out to India.

to the king of Portugal on numerous occasions¹⁶⁵ – even a vizier who had been installed by them, the Arab Rashid bin Zarkam Al-Muscati (1529-1536).¹⁶⁶ Horses and other commodities were taken from them at very low prices, and taxes or debts due to the king were not paid.¹⁶⁷ These letters of complaint still remain in the ANTT in Lisbon, some of them in Arabic and others in Persian. But were those missives which arrived at Lisbon ever read and considered by the king? The answer may well be in the negative because little, if anything, was done to alleviate the situation in Hormuz.

There is a letter from Turan Shah IV to Manuel I after the death of Albuquerque in which he complains about the intervention of Portuguese officials in the kingdom's internal affairs.¹⁶⁸ Towards the very end of Portuguese rule, in February 1621, Mohammed Shah IV made a similar complaint about the captains of Hormuz, and advised the king of the Union that if he wanted Hormuz to be safe and wealthy he should send 'such captains as are not merchants, because the mariners, which might serve in your Majesties Navies to keep this Strait are all employed in the captain's ship and frigates'.¹⁶⁹

Corruption in the early seventeenth century met with the fierce disapproval of Philip III. This is apparent in his recommendation that fines should be imposed on all those who traded in pepper to Hormuz and Muscat illegally, both of which were small ports where control should have been tight.¹⁷⁰ Yet for all of Philip's bluster, the crown dragged its feet in dealing with abuse. Gradually, and somewhat belatedly, orders were

¹⁶⁵ De Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa*, pp. 48-53, 59-60, 162-64, 166-71, 178-80, 188-90. One of these letters sent and signed by Mohammed Shah II was very important as it contains information about the captain Martim Afonso de Mello. See Appendix II, Doc. 4.

¹⁶⁶ De Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa*, p. 48.

¹⁶⁷ Diogo de Melo, captain of Hormuz from 1524-28, was an important example of this behaviour as his successor Cristóvão de Mendonça mentioned in the letter to King João III. ANTT, *A. G.* vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, Carta de Cristóvão de Mendonça a el-rei D. João III, p. 255. See Appendix II, Doc. 1.

¹⁶⁸ J. de Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1790), p. 59.

¹⁶⁹ P. Samuel, *Hakluytus posthumus, or Purchas his pilgrims* (Glasgow, 1905), pp. 365-67.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

issued to all the viceroys and governors in Goa not to give *cartazes* too freely to merchants, to carry cinnamon and ginger to Mecca, Hormuz or Diu.¹⁷¹ In 1609 the king instructed Viceroy Rui Lourenco de Tavora to entrust a competent person to inquire into the excesses committed in the renting of the customs at Hormuz, to carry out instructions for collection of the custom rents at Hormuz and Muscat, and to prohibit the captains from forwarding goods belonging to other merchants. When the captains of Hormuz monopolised the horse trade, the king tried to break it by permitting them only a fourth share of the trade, leaving the rest for sale.¹⁷² The viceroy warned all, including the *fidalgos*, of the danger of carrying contraband from India to sell to Muslims in the Gulf and Persia.¹⁷³ The crown wanted the viceroy to open the way for silks, carpets and velvets coming from Basra and Persia to Hormuz, to prevent the diminution of the *alfândega*, and to watch all the exits through which goods came.

None of this would have helped relations between the Arabs and the Portuguese around Hormuz. The very worst abuses were incendiary in the short-term; and in the long-term, the combination of perceived corruption and prohibitive rates of duty chipped away at Portuguese authority in the Gulf, encouraging resistance to it.¹⁷⁴ However, it is very doubtful that the behaviour of the Portuguese in Hormuz damaged the kingdom's external trade. Their stewardship of *alfândega* was politically unpalatable for all sorts of reasons – but, if customs revenues are a reliable guide, their exploitation of Hormuz's commercial potential was on the whole successful, and increasingly so as the century progressed. Thus, on paper at least, the captains of Hormuz were competent merchants and financial administrators. In the 1540s, the captains of Hormuz fortress had been satisfied with earning about 5,000 *cruzados* in

¹⁷¹ A. B. Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. II (Lisbon, 1953), p. 640.

¹⁷² *DUP*, vol. I, p. 231.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 232

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, Document 4 in Appendix II.

their three years of office in the city, but later they were not satisfied with 200,000 *cruzados*. By 1619 the captain's income had increased to 300,000 *cruzados* for a three-year tenure.¹⁷⁵ During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, for which we have reasonable data on income and expenses, an initial outlay of 145,000 *ashrafi* would have been recouped very quickly. Indeed, for the first half of 1618 alone the customs revenue of Hormuz was 105,500 *ashrafi*.¹⁷⁶ In 1620 it was over 200,000.¹⁷⁷ The flow of money in and out of the Portuguese treasury was not quite so straightforward as this, but it is still clear that captains stood to benefit by the end of their tenures. If Hormuz proved to be a lucrative posting, then it was up to individual captains to ensure this remained so, and the instances of petty extortion and the conduct of business at preferential rates must be understood in this light. The captains of Hormuz, more than elsewhere by virtue of their investment, had a very real stake in the success of the kingdom and the Gulf, and their actions were shaped by the twin influences of distant authority and devolved responsibility.

There were also institutional changes in Hormuz. In 1521 Manuel I ordered Portuguese officials to be placed in the customs house to replace the native Hormuzian officials, which led to rebellion in the Gulf in November of that year. By this order Mohammed Shah II was forced to hand over the office to Duarte de Meneses in 1522.¹⁷⁸ Soon after he arrived in Goa, Meneses sent reinforcements to Hormuz under his brother Luíz. Another treaty was signed in Hormuz on 15 July 1523,¹⁷⁹ between Luíz de Meneses and the king, similar to that signed between Albuquerque and Turan Shah IV in 1515. One of the conditions was that the king of Hormuz and his successors should not collect any

¹⁷⁵ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 199.

¹⁷⁶ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 157.

¹⁷⁷ See Table 2.5., below.

¹⁷⁸ He assumed the office of Governor of India in January 1522.

¹⁷⁹ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 358.

tax on goods brought by Portuguese vessels to Hormuz from Portugal, suggesting that the crown saw Hormuz as one of the markets where it could sell European goods exported via the Cape route. Another clause stated that every year the king of Hormuz would pay to the king of Portugal a tribute in gold, silver and pearls worth 60,000 *ashrafi*, at the rate of 5,000 *ashrafi* each month. The increase was justified on the grounds that the city's customs receipts and security had improved. In addition, all other conditions agreed with Albuquerque in 1515 were to remain in force. Thus, local Hormuzian ships were to be allowed freedom of navigation, but no ship was to sail into the Straits of Bab-Al-Mandeb or to the coast of Sofala, since both were beyond Portuguese control. All foreign vessels bringing merchandise to Hormuz and those foreign ships chartered by Hormuzian merchants to transport goods would also be free, provided the relevant documents were shown. Caravans on land were also guaranteed their safety. Another clause, linked with the first one, provided that whenever Portuguese vessels arrived at the port of Hormuz nothing was to be taken away from them except on payment, and the Portuguese too were to purchase whatever they required.¹⁸⁰ An important provision in the treaty mentioned that the Muslims of Hormuz who brought goods on board Portuguese vessels were not exempt from customs dues, as were the commodities brought by Portuguese Christian nationals. We can see that the word 'Christian' was included because there were Portuguese nationals who had become Muslims¹⁸¹ and these were debarred from exemption. If any Portuguese

¹⁸⁰ Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 30.

¹⁸¹ This issue raises several interesting points. First, why did those Portuguese become Muslims, instead of the Muslims becoming Christians in line with the Portuguese religious policy when they arrived in the East? Where did they live in Hormuz, in the fortress or in the city? Second, did they marry Muslim women? Who supported those Portuguese in Hormuz? These matters are still unknown. It seems likely that some of those Portuguese who became Muslims were, in fact, Moors from Andalusia, who had hidden their faith for fear of being killed at that time. And some of them were Arab Muslims who not considered as citizens in the full sense in Portugal. The Portuguese used them in their fleet's expeditions because they were good artisans, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, and so on. When they came to the Gulf as part of the crew of Albuquerque's ships, they escaped and joined the Muslims in the city of Hormuz. In 1515, when Albuquerque was in Hormuz and signed the second treaty with the king, he asked the king to return all those Portuguese who had escaped from

Christian national tried to cheat by taking goods belonging to Muslims into Hormuz, he was subject to the payment of double the amount of duty, as well as being punished as a criminal by the captain of the fortress.

The Portuguese did not remain content for long with this treaty. After only six years, in 1529, the annual tribute was raised again to 100,000 *ashrafi*.¹⁸² This increase was an economic trap for Hormuz. The Portuguese knew the demand was excessive and could not be met – in 1530 the crucially important customs revenues of Hormuz did not exceed 93,000 *ashrafi*.¹⁸³ As a result the king's debts to the Portuguese crown steadily mounted, exceeding 500,000 *ashrafi* by 1542.¹⁸⁴ This gave the Portuguese government additional leverage. Most notably, it provided an excuse to fully incorporate the *alfândega* of Hormuz into the Portuguese state in January 1543.¹⁸⁵ Viceroy Martim Afonso, having satisfied himself of the inability of the king to pay, agreed to waive all claims to back dues on condition that the king conceded to the Portuguese the entire customs duties of the port from that point onwards. Owing to his difficult position, the king was obliged to submit.¹⁸⁶ For his acquiescence the king was 'rewarded' with various crumbs from the table – some small allowances, including 1,800 *ashrafi* a year for his personal maintenance, and 10,000 *ashrafi* for his household expenses.

After they took over responsibility for the *alfândega*, the captains of Hormuz introduced a far more complex and variable system of customs dues, for reasons that have already been suggested above. It is recorded that Oman had rates that differed

his vessels and hidden in the city. See *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 129, vol. IV, pp. 153-54, 176; Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. I, pp. 97-102.

¹⁸² Godinho, *Les finances de l'état portugais des Indes Orientales*, pp. 44-7; Faroughy, *The Bahrain Islands (750-1951)*, p. 61.

¹⁸³ See Table 2.4, below.

¹⁸⁴ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 450.

¹⁸⁵ S. Botelho, *Cartas de Simão Botelho, Tombo do Estado da Índia*, pp. 86, 90. In this cartas can be found the revenue of the *alfândega* of Hormuz from 1523 to 1550; Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, vol. 2, p. 162.

¹⁸⁶ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. IV, pp. 247-45.

from those of Hormuz. On some goods unloaded in Muscat, for example white fabrics, the usual Hormuzian levy of 11 per cent was paid. However, on bonnets, belts and indigo from Cambay, pepper and nutmeg, tin and sugar from south India and Gujarat, the rate was 7.5 per cent.¹⁸⁷ On some other Indian goods like raw cotton, rice and butter, the rate was no more than 5 per cent, and on textiles 10 per cent; but textiles imported to Hormuz from Malacca were taxed at 16 per cent and textiles exported to Hormuz from Persian workshops were only taxed at 5 per cent.¹⁸⁸ The superintendent of the royal finances in Hormuz believed that a 6 per cent duty on drugs like indigo, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, long pepper and sugar exported by Arabian merchants to Basra, would be able to fetch 25,000 *cruzados* per annum.¹⁸⁹

Table 2.4. Hormuz: Customs Revenues, 1515-1588 (in *ashrafi*)

Actual Revenues			
Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1515 ¹⁹⁰	100, 000	1539	67, 595
1524	95, 774	1540	93, 512
1525	83, 318	1541	111, 779
1526	101, 677	1542	87, 882
1527	77, 269	1543	108, 930
1528	87, 066	1544	93, 603
1529	90, 332	1545	70, 280
1530	92, 378	1546	79, 881
1531	81, 001	1547	62, 269
1532	98, 771	1548	61, 646
1533	76, 876	1549	90, 782
1534	87, 938	1550	135, 000
1535	83, 294	1551	95, 000
1536	79, 961	1568	83, 333 ?
1537	75, 255	1574	170,000 ?
1538	101, 822	1588	180, 000 ?

Source. Botelho, *Cartas Tombo*, ff. 76- 9; Godinho, *Les finances de l'état portugais des Indes Orientales*, pp. 47-8.

¹⁸⁷ *APO*, fasc. 5-3-936, Doação de metade da alfândega de Muscate a Filipe I, 22/v/1589, pp. 1247-51.

¹⁸⁸ Godinho, *Les finances de l'état portugais des Indes Orientales*, p. 49.

¹⁸⁹ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 199.

¹⁹⁰ This figure is according to Barros, *Ásia*, vol. II, Liv. x, p. 418.

The proceeds of this emerging system are difficult to calculate. Some indication can be had from a detailed account of the revenues and expenditures of Hormuz during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Revenue collected for Hormuz from Qalhât on the south coast of Oman to Julfar in the Ras Musandam was about 28,000 *ashrafi*, broken down as follows: Qalhât 1,100 *ashrafi*; Muscat, 4,000; Suhar, 1,500; Khúr Fakhân, 1,500; Dibba, 500; Lima, 700; and Julfar district, 7,500. In addition, 1,500 *ashrafi* was usually taken by the authorities in Hormuz for each annual pearl fishing voyage.¹⁹¹

A longer run of data can be found in Table 2.4 (above) which gives customs revenues in Hormuz for selected years before and after the Portuguese assumption of *alfândega*. After the first year of the new regime the customs yield was low, not more than 93,603 *ashrafi* in 1544 compared with 111,779 in 1541.¹⁹² After 1543, however, the question of arrears of tribute no longer arose because the Portuguese satisfied their claims themselves; and by this compulsory appropriation, they became the real proprietors of the *alfândega* of Hormuz.¹⁹³

A number of points can be discerned from the figures in Table 2.4. First, for sixty years beginning in 1515, the customs revenue of Hormuz rarely exceeded its pre-occupation level. On only two occasions before the Portuguese assumed control of *alfândega* in 1543 (1526 and 1538) did revenue match or exceed 100,000 *ashrafi*. After 1543 the average customs income was around 75,000 *ashrafi* per annum, and, with odd exceptions (1550 for example), this remained the case until revenues began to increase very sharply during the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

Also apparent is the fluctuation of revenues, although it must be noted that after 1551 there are few reliable data in the Portuguese sources. Subrahmanyam located

¹⁹¹ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. II, liv. II, pp. 50-55.

¹⁹² P. S. S. Pissurlencar, *Regimentos das fortalezas da Índia* (Goa, 1951), p. 180. See also Table 2.4, above.

¹⁹³ Botelho, *Tombo do Estado da Índia*, pp. 76-8.

Hormuz's poor mid-century performance in a larger economic downturn, also noticeable in Malacca.¹⁹⁴ The vulnerability of Portuguese shipping to wreck or capture partly explains some of the fluctuations, as happened to the largest *nao Madre de Deus* which was taken by the English in 1592.¹⁹⁵ Other fluctuations stemmed from the condition of eastern trade more generally. Gaspar Correia, for example, mentioned 'much hunger' on the Coromandel coast in East India and 'a lack of food in the ports of the Straits of Bab-Al-Mandeb'.¹⁹⁶ Several local causes can also be suggested, however. The confused state of Basra and its trade from 1536, when the Ottomans occupied Baghdad, to 1546, when Basra also fell, had a strong effect on Hormuz. Trade to and from Basra had been worth about 9,000 *ashrafi* yearly.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, the war between the Ottomans and the Persians during the reign of Shah Tahmasp (1524-76) brought Turkish troops towards Lāristan and Shiraz and led to the capture of Tabriz and Isfahan.¹⁹⁸ The main land route between Hormuz and Persia passed through Lāristan, which brought to the *alfândega* about 35,000 *ashrafi* yearly. As a result of all these events, the revenue of Hormuz declined until the last quarter of the century.

Table 2.4 also shows an improvement in *alfândega* revenue during the last quarter of the century. This can be attributed in part to more stable relations in the Gulf between the Portuguese authorities and the Persians, especially during the first part of Shah Abbas's reign. This encouraged the silk trade via Hormuz, for example. Turkish commercial activity may also have been increasing in the Gulf to fund their war against the Safavids. In addition, there seems to have been a general expansion in Portuguese

¹⁹⁴ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, pp. 94-5.

¹⁹⁵ G. V. Scammell, *Seafaring, Sailors and Trade, 1450-1750* (Aldershot, 2003), X, p. 181; J. T. Lanman, 'Life on a Portuguese *nao*: Linschoten's Voyage to India, 1583', *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra* (Coimbra, 1985), vol. 32, p. 281. The English found in *Madre de Deus* correspondence, maps, an account of China and its riches, and the Portuguese register of the East Indies.

¹⁹⁶ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. iv, pp. 131-32.

¹⁹⁷ *Biblioteca de Ajuda*, Cód. 42-51, pp. 293, 331: 'Pareceres sobre os Turcos que estão em Bassorá', 1547.

¹⁹⁸ P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, vol. II, p. 164.

traffic on the Gulf route via Hormuz and Basra. The balance between those European imports from Asia that were shipped via the Cape and those that were carried by caravan implies that more traffic was passing through Hormuz at the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁹⁹ While annual arrivals at Lisbon via the Cape declined from 39 ships in 1580 to 28 in 1610, arrivals at Hormuz stood at 54 ships before 1622.²⁰⁰ Boxer pointed out some time ago that the last quarter of the sixteenth century saw a decline in the volume of Indonesian spices sent around the Cape to Europe. Instead, most of the spices secured by the Portuguese were sold to Asian traders at Malacca, Goa and Hormuz. Cloves are a good case in point. By the end of the century the Portuguese had abandoned efforts to enforce their monopoly of the clove trade by which a third of the total export crop was reserved for the crown. As a result, cloves were sold to Muslim merchants from all over Asia, and at Hormuz Persian, Turkish, Arab, Armenian and Venetian merchants congregated to trade with officials and private traders.²⁰¹ As Steensgaard has pointed out, though we know little about the private Portuguese trade, what we do know indicates the importance of officials as entrepreneurs.²⁰²

Perhaps there was also a more positive dimension to Portuguese management of Hormuz as a market. In 1567 the city's mosques were specifically excepted from Portugal's anti-Muslim provisions; for, as Boxer claims, even if the local Shah was a Portuguese puppet, the population was Muslim, and some regard had to be paid to the susceptibilities of the neighbouring and increasingly powerful Persians.²⁰³

As noted above, increased taxation also bolstered Portuguese revenues. Officials at Hormuz imposed various new taxes, for example a levy of one per cent notionally

¹⁹⁹ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 168.

²⁰⁰ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, pp. 86, 142. For Hormuz see Table 2.6, below. See Barendse, *The Arabian Seas*, p. 309 for departures in the seventeenth century.

²⁰¹ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, pp. 61-2.

²⁰² Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 93. The volume of Portuguese trade through Hormuz can be implied from the figures in Table 2.1, above.

²⁰³ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 69.

intended for the maintenance of the fleet.²⁰⁴ In 1580, for Jews, Armenians and Muslims at Hormuz there was an extra duty added equal to three per cent, and in the years 1618-19 there is reference to a fourteen per cent duty in Hormuz.²⁰⁵

Yet expenses were outpacing revenues, as shown in Table 2.5 (below). In addition, these statistics do not show that Goa still needed financial support from Hormuz, perhaps right up to the island's fall in 1622. As mentioned in Ruy Lourenço de Távora's letter to Philip III in 1610, from the total balance of Hormuz's revenues in that year (154,500 *ashrafi*) about 45,000 *ashrafi* were remitted to Goa.²⁰⁶

Table 2.5. The Expenses and Balance of *Alfândega* at Hormuz in the Seventeenth Century

Year	Amount (in <i>ashrafis</i>)	Expenses	Balance
1607	192,000	76,098	+ 115,902
1609	229,000	56,649	+ 172,351
1610	244,500	90,000	+ 154,500
1620	200,684	130,284	+ 70,400

Source: *BNL-FG* 1975 fls. 364-365v; 1978 fls. I, 28v, 52v, 77, 107v-109v, 132.

The known values of the *alfândega* after its grant to João III varied considerably. In 1568 the total income was about 83,333 *ashrafi* (25,000,000 *reis*), but Portuguese expenses exceeded this by some margin. The total revenue in 1607, as shown in Table 2.5, had risen to 192,000 *ashrafi* (57,600,000 *reis*), and just before the fall of Hormuz had gone up again to 200,684 *ashrafi* (60,205,000 *reis*).²⁰⁷ It should be noted that the major part of the total expenditure in 1607 (76,098 *ashrafi*) went on the payment of salaries (38,157 *ashrafi* or 11,447,000 *reis*), and the remainder was spent on supporting the navy (13,598 *ashrafi* or 4,079,100 *reis*) and on general maintenance

²⁰⁴ *APO*, vol. III, p. 89.

²⁰⁵ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 198.

²⁰⁶ *BNL-FG*, codice no. 1975, Carta de Ruy Lourenço de Távora para Filipe II (1610), pp. 364-65; Carta de Filipe II para D. Jerónimo de Azevedo (1612), pp. 143-44.

²⁰⁷ M. S. Blanco, 'O Estado Português da Índia', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lisbon, 1992, p. 222.

(14,213 *ashrafi* or 4,263,840 *reis*).²⁰⁸ From 1581 to 1590, the balance of trade was low, but not the gross income; the reduction came from the increase in expenditure.²⁰⁹ In the same table, we can see that there were surpluses in the Hormuz budget under Portuguese control. In 1620, just two years before the fall of Hormuz, the receipts were high (200,684 *ashrafi*) but the expenses consumed two thirds of the budget (130,284 *ashrafi*). It does not seem likely that these sums were spent on maintaining the fortress and the ships stationed there. Ruy Freire, in his complaint about the condition of Hormuz, claimed that the town lacked everything by way of defence. The captain and his officials used the ships for trading, and nobody cared about defence.²¹⁰

Table 2.6. Annual Arrivals at Hormuz from the East c.1620

Port	Ships	Port	Ships
Sind	8	Dabhol	4
Nagana	3	Goa	12
Diu	5	Cochin	2
Daman	3	Malacca	2
Bassein	3	Bengal	2
Chaul	8	Malindi	2

Source: Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 197

At the beginning of seventeenth century, then, Hormuz remained a valuable prize. The yield of the *alfândega* after the 1570s was substantial, and grew until the fall of the city in 1622.²¹¹ Its port stood on the trade routes via Basra and Baghdad, and Persia in the reign of Shah Abbas, especially the route between Isfahan and northern India. Steensgaard points out that in the early seventeenth century Hormuz still had a considerable eastward trade, as set out in Table 2.6, above.

²⁰⁸ Pissurlencar, *Regimentos das fortalezas*, pp. 528-30.

²⁰⁹ Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, vol. 2, pp. 157, 346.

²¹⁰ *DUP*, vol. II, p. 274.

²¹¹ BNL -F G, codice no. 11410 fls. 107v-109v, 132.

2.4. The *Cartaz* System

Cartaz was a term used by the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean from their arrival in the region. It was an important element of Portugal's commercial organisation in the Asian part of their empire. *Cartaz* is derived from the Arabic *quirtas*²¹² and means 'paper' or something important written on a specific paper. In the Portuguese system the *cartaz* was a safe conduct certificate or licence which allowed vessels, especially those of Muslims, to carry goods and sail safely across the Indian Ocean. The *cartaz* was issued on payment of a specific amount of money. In Gujerat the price was fixed at one *tanga*, and in the Gulf and other places it was five *pardãos* per *cartaz*.²¹³ *Cartazes* were used for the first time in 1502, after Manuel I declared the whole of the maritime region of the *Estado da Índia* to be a closed sea.²¹⁴ The Portuguese government also declared that any unlicensed ship in the Indian Ocean near Goa, Hormuz, Malacca or elsewhere was liable to be seized or sunk if it met Portuguese ships, particularly if it belonged to Muslim traders.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, sometimes no ship was safe from the cupidity of the Portuguese – even vessels that held a licence were seized or sunk, whether friendly or hostile.²¹⁶

In the Gulf, the Portuguese stipulated that all ships from Hormuz trading with the Malabar coast should carry *cartazes*, in practice amounting to ten or more vessels a year coming from Cannanore and Cochin.²¹⁷ The Arab tribes living in the north of Bander Rig²¹⁸ on the Persian coast were also obliged to buy the licenses to ensure

²¹² See Correia, *The Three voyages of Vasco da Gama*, vol. I, p. 298.

²¹³ K. S. Mathew, 'Trade in the Indian Ocean and the Portuguese System of Cartazes' in M. D. Newitt, (ed.), *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, Exeter Studies in History, no. 11 (Exeter, 1986), pp. 42, 74, 76. Every ship had to pay its dues at the *fortaleza* or *feitoria* where the *cartaz* was issued and to leave a sum as security for the payment of similar dues on its return. *APO*, fasco. V, parte I.

²¹⁴ Mathew, 'Trade in the Indian Ocean and the Portuguese System of Cartazes', pp. 42, 73.

²¹⁵ Boxer, *The Portuguese Sea-borne Empire*, p. 48.

²¹⁶ Correia, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, p. xxix; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 180.

²¹⁷ Mathew, 'Trade in the Indian Ocean and the Portuguese System of Cartazes', p. 75.

²¹⁸ Meaning 'Sandy Bay' in Persian.

protection for their sailing boats from the Portuguese *fustas*, which often cruised the narrow seas.²¹⁹ It was known among the merchants in the Gulf, that anyone trying to escape this risked being robbed by the Portuguese, who went out seeking prey, an activity which was more profitable than the sale of the *cartaz* itself.

Cartazes served several purposes. They obliged ships to call at Portuguese ports to pay customs dues. They emphasised Portuguese claims of monopoly of the trade in certain commodities.²²⁰ Clauses relating to the carriage of arms and ammunition were security measures against native power in the region. Symbolically for the Portuguese, *cartazes* were proof of their possession and occupation of the sea. To make their presence effectively felt, safe conducts were backed up by naval patrols, further supported and given foundation by the network of forts and factories around the Indian Ocean rim.²²¹ In reality they were a tacit acknowledgement that Portuguese shipping could not monopolise the ocean, and that it was neither feasible nor profitable to keep trade out of local hands. This rationale even extended to the tender of contracts to local shippers to carry Portuguese cargoes. Much work of this kind could be found around the city's fortress.²²²

From the beginning, the *cartaz* system was totally disregarded by some local merchants in the Indian Ocean. In 1513 twelve or thirteen ships carrying pepper and other goods left the Malabar coast for Arabia without *cartazes*. K.S. Mathew, in his work on this system, points out that in 1547 merchants sent vessels loaded with pepper to Mecca without troubling to collect *cartazes* from the Portuguese officials.²²³ In the Gulf also, the *cartaz* system faced problems after the Turks occupied Basra, as we learn

²¹⁹ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 24.

²²⁰ Newitt, *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 7.

²²¹ J. Magalhão, *The Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 52. For the most recent treatment see M. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*.

²²² Botelho, *Cartas Tombo*, pp. 86-90.

²²³ Mathew, 'Trade in the Indian Ocean and the Portuguese System of Cartazes', pp. 77-8.

from a letter from Hormuz to João de Castro in Goa in 1546, in which it is noted that some vessels sailing to Qatif, Bahrain and Basra did not stop in Hormuz to get *cartazes*.²²⁴

It must also be recognized that the unilateral declaration of sea rights and enforcement of *cartaz* could encourage plunder and piracy. In fact, the dividing line between piracy and the Portuguese concept of legal confiscation was very thin. Even assuming its legal validity, it was a dangerous weapon in the hands of Portugal's navies, as it was difficult to judge cases of interception at sea due to lack of evidence. Later, the *cartaz* became little more than a device for taxing Asiatic shipping and obtaining revenue for the Portuguese crown. *Cartazes* became a key factor in Portugal's ability to claim a sea empire, as in the seventeenth century they imposed the licenses *cartazes* on all the European powers.²²⁵

Historians have argued about the broad impact of Portugal's entry into the Indian Ocean system in the sixteenth century. For some, notably van Leur and Steensgaard, the impact was negligible because of the 'traditional' commercial techniques that Portugal introduced to a highly compatible system in Asia. Others, most notably Subrahmanyam, have challenged this view by arguing for wide-ranging social and cultural change in the commerce of the Indian Ocean after the European penetration, and for evolution *within* those structures of 'empire' that were established there after 1497.²²⁶ Insofar as the Gulf was inextricably connected with the Indian Ocean through commerce, and because Hormuz was part of a much larger integrated Portuguese presence in Asia, these contrasting views must be engaged with in the present study.

²²⁴ ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, 2 February 1546 f. 50.

²²⁵ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. I, liv. vi, p. 75.

²²⁶ For a perceptive and fair-minded summary see the conclusion to Subrahmanyam's *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, pp. 270-77.

One thing at least is certain. It is hardly to be expected that the Portuguese could suddenly change a system of commerce that had been in place for more than two hundred years. The flow of goods remained largely unchanged.²²⁷ In certain areas, private commercial activity seems to have surpassed that of the Portuguese crown, but it was closely associated with the traditional native system rather than any superimposed template. Indeed, according to Thomaz's reading of the surviving evidence, Portuguese private traders habitually engaged in coastal trading in order to evade monopolistic restrictions imposed by the crown.²²⁸

By necessity Portuguese shipping followed the old routes in the Indian Ocean because the winds of the tropical seasons dictated their movement. It would be wrong, however, to focus only on seaborne trade and communication. According to Disney, land-based revenues and overland trade routes tended to become more important to the Portuguese over time, and, in addition, they were used for the conveyance of mail and intelligence.²²⁹ Still less did the emergence of the Cape route alter the established patterns of trade. Evidence has already been presented to this effect,²³⁰ but we might also consider the comments of Thomaz. The Portuguese never exported to Europe more than 12.5 per cent of the total production of the Moluccas, while the rest was distributed to Asian consumers in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf and Persia.²³¹ Moreover, the *Carreira da India* could yield a net annual profit of about 33,000 *cruzados*, whereas voyages within the region starting from Macau yielded 10,000, and those from Malacca 92,000. For Thomaz, these figures are sufficient to demonstrate that Portuguese

²²⁷ Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, pp. 162, 390-91 n.17. Compare with Subrahmanyam, pp. 213. There seems to be consensus on this point.

²²⁸ L. F. Thomaz, 'Portuguese Sources on Sixteenth Century Indian Economic History', in John Correia-Afonso, ed. *Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems*, pp. 100-1.

²²⁹ A. Disney, 'The Portuguese Empire in India c. 1550-1650' in John Correia-Afonso, ed. *Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems*, p. 151.

²³⁰ See above, pp. 128-9

²³¹ Thomaz, 'Portuguese Sources on Sixteenth Century Indian Economic History', p. 103.

commerce in the sixteenth century developed predominantly in the Indian Ocean over a network of short and medium range routes which actually encompassed almost every coast of Asia, and thereby was closely interlinked with the local condition of supply and demand.²³² Thomaz continues:

In addition to this question of geographical bounds, there was another factor which made Portuguese commercial activity in the Indian Ocean dependent on, and complementary to, the native production system, namely, that the Portuguese were neither able to impose their own products upon the Asian markets nor to introduce alternative production system on Asian soil or to control the existing ones. As a matter of fact the main reason which drove the Portuguese to apply themselves to the local trade seems to be that the Cape route to Portugal was often a loser.²³³

The Portuguese, then, were one of many players in the commerce of the Indian Ocean. Like the Dutch, they provided freight services to Asian merchants on the 'intense' routes between India and the Gulf and Red Sea.²³⁴ The persistence of these routes and market centers ensured the continued importance of the Gulf and of Hormuz as its distributive hub.

Yet, within a framework partly conditioned by nature and the environment, it is nonetheless clear from the Gulf that the character of the Portuguese presence changed over time. In a conclusion that has some sympathy with Subrahmanyam's view, there is evidence of occasional changes in how the Portuguese managed the economy – and by extension the society – of the Gulf.

It is clear that the Portuguese were careful to establish their own privileges and their own commercial predominance in the Gulf in the years after 1515. Indications of this can be found in the first treaty concluded between Albuquerque and the king of Hormuz. Second, Portuguese methods of sea control – whether military in the form of patrols, or economic in the form of *cartazes* – had an initially adverse effect on local shipping, but the signs of recovery were rapid. *Alfândega* revenue increased towards the

²³² Thomaz, 'Portuguese Sources on Sixteenth Century Indian Economic History', p. 103.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²³⁴ Subrahmayam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 213.

end of the century, but captains and officials absorbed most of the profits, and little seems to have been redistributed into the Gulf economy. This leads naturally to a third point: as the Portuguese profited from controlling the Gulf's commerce, so, according to Stripling, the local people were commensurately impoverished.²³⁵ It is easy for the present writer to sympathise with this view; but it is also hard to square 'impoverishment' with the volume of traffic passing through Hormuz and the Gulf at the close of the sixteenth century. Perhaps it would be more accurate to conclude that the merchant elites of Hormuz and some of its nearby trading partners learnt to prosper under the Portuguese, even if there were periods of tense relations and friction. During the crisis of the city in April 1622, the crown prince of Hormuz tried to slip out with jewels and money estimated to be worth around a million *ashrafi*.²³⁶ The 'people' who suffered most were almost certainly the same people who had suffered under the old regime, and whose grievances are easier to uncover in the later seventeenth century.²³⁷ Higher taxes may have eaten into the profit margins of merchants and peddlers and eroded their incentives to remain in trade – all the more galling without any apparent Portuguese investment in local infrastructure or institutions. However, the fortunes of merchants operating in the sixteenth-century Gulf are still very poorly understood, and one must be pessimistic that the sources have survived to allow detailed analysis of their operations.

²³⁵ Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs 1511-1574*, p. 80.

²³⁶ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xxxviii.

²³⁷ Omani resistance to Hormuz in the fifteenth century points to discontent in at least one of the kingdom's territories. See pp. 60-1, 176.

Chapter Three: Political Aspects of Portuguese Rule in the Gulf

From the evidence discussed in the previous chapter, it is difficult to tell just how much the growth of trade in the Gulf can be linked to active policies on the part of the Portuguese, as the *Estado da Índia* never became a body of lands and peoples effectively controlled by a single authority. It was more a network of trading posts, linked, as G. V. Scammell points out, 'by sea and with the influence of the mother country spread less by glorious feats of arms than by the zeal of missionaries and the enterprise of traders commonly living and working far beyond even the most tenuous jurisdiction of the Portuguese crown'.¹

Economy and authority were inextricably linked; and every political movement made by the Portuguese in the establishment of their seaborne empire depended on relationships not between the land and the ports which they occupied, but between the ports and the sea. In the light of this tendency, we can analyse Portuguese policy in the Gulf. The so-called Portuguese empire in the East was supported, therefore, by numerous fortresses, sometimes with the ownership of the intermediate stretch of coast, but rarely extending to the interior.² This is because the Portuguese were unable to conquer large areas of land. The *Estado da Índia* received fifteen times more revenue from maritime trade than from overland trade.³ Neither, arguably, were they especially interested in colonisation as an element of their strategy in the East.⁴

Throughout the sixteenth century, the Portuguese held supreme, though not unchallenged, control in the Gulf region.⁵ Until the fall of Hormuz, the political

¹ G. V. Scammell, *The First Imperial Age* (London, 1989), p. 15.

² R. Goertz, 'From territorial borders to an <inner frontier>: the first century of the *Estado da Índia*', *Stvdia*, 53 (Lisbon, 1994), p. 95

³ M. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 121.

⁴ See Chapter Two, above.

⁵ See Chapter Four, section 1, below.

administration of the Gulf was a part of the government of the *Estado da Índia*. That *Estado*, as the settlements were collectively designated, continued within the rigid frame imposed by Manuel I. After Manuel appointed the first viceroy in India (*visorey das Índia*) in 1505, supreme authority was usually delegated to noblemen from the royal entourage, serving in general for three years.⁶

The viceroy or governor general, resident at Goa, was responsible for all the fortresses and their establishments from the Indian Ocean to the China Sea, subject to directives from Lisbon.⁷ Nominally responsible to him were the captains at Mozambique, Muscat, Hormuz, Colombo and Malacca;⁸ these officers, however, were given virtually a free hand in dealing with neighbouring rulers, even in making decisions to wage war. In the Portuguese settlements local councils composed of the captain, chief factor and other officers controlled the purchase and sale of all goods and collected customs revenues.⁹

In theory, the viceroy was authorised to remove all or any commanders of fortresses, warships, and soldiers, as well as any legal or bureaucratic officials who failed to give satisfaction in their positions. He had sweeping judicial powers. He was also empowered to approve or prevent all disbursements, claims, and financial transactions made by or on behalf of the royal exchequer. In practice, however, the viceroy's power was circumscribed in a number of respects.¹⁰ For example, with their tenures limited to three years, viceroys found it difficult to exercise firm control over their staff. Moreover, any charges deriving from indiscipline or abuse had to be brought

⁶ Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. 1, p. 250-51; Scammell, *The First Imperial Age*, p. 151.

⁷ J. Marinho dos Santos, 'Honra e Primor na Expansão Portuguesa (Século XVI)' *Estudos e Ensaios em Homenagem a Vitorino Magalhães Godinho*. 1a. (Lisbon, 1988), p. 151.

⁸ After that, the Portuguese divided the Asian part of their empire into two sections and Malacca came under the second one which was ruled by another viceroy. Santos, 'Honra e Primor na Expansão Portuguesa (Século XVI)', pp. 151-52.

⁹ Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Moundo*, vol. II, pp. 101-2.

¹⁰ C. R. Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century* (Delhi, 1980), pp. 9-10.

by the Crown from the courts in Lisbon.¹¹ As the voyage home often took over six months, little progress could be made during the period of one vice-regency. Therefore, ambitious or dissident officers were prone to dispute the viceroy's authority or intrigue against him with the king and court.¹² The same slowness of communication often forced viceroys to take action on urgent matters without waiting for a response from Lisbon, or else encouraged inertia.

Financial support for the *Estado da Índia* derived largely from the sea. It came from maritime commerce – from trade between Asia and Europe – from taxation and, to a lesser extent, from the *cartaz* system and from plundering indigenous merchants.¹³ The *Casa da Índia* and *Casa da Mina e Índia* were established by Manuel I and handled all aspects of trade and navigation between Portugal and the East. They were agencies of the government who only had authority to sell goods at a fixed price.¹⁴ Thus, the *alfândega* of Hormuz belonged to the *Casa da Índia*.

It has often been noted that Portuguese policy changed to an extent in the transition from one reign to another, owing both to the character and theories of each sovereign, and to the process by which his entourage was formed.¹⁵ Before the 1480s, the Portuguese Crown was characterised by a preoccupation with military adventurism in North Africa, rather than the direct control of maritime trade. The phenomenon of Portuguese royal mercantilism reached its apogee in the period from the 1480s to the 1520s, under the reigns of King João II and his successor Manuel I.¹⁶ During the reign of Manuel I in particular, policy was concentrated on the foundation of the new empire,

¹¹ Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Moundo*, vol. II, p. 102.

¹² Crone, *The Discovery of the East*, pp. 60-2.

¹³ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, pp. 62-3, 78; Scammell, *The First Imperial Age*, p. 15; Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 121.

¹⁴ Baião, *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Moundo*, vol. III, p. 80; A. Russell-Wood, 'Government and governance of European empires, 1450-1800', in *An Expanding World*, vol. 21, part I, ed. A. J. R. Russell-Wood (Aldershot, 2000), p. xxvi; A. Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol.1, p. 258.

¹⁵ L. F. Thomas, 'Factions, interests and messianism', *IESHR*, 28/2 (1991), p. 98.

¹⁶ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 47.

while João III attended to the system of revenue collection in the East and to the Europeanisation of Portugal's intellectual life.¹⁷ Sebastião, in contrast, focused on internal affairs in Portugal and with the Moroccan question, which brought about his death in the battle of *Al-Qser Al-Kebir* in 1578.¹⁸

3.1. Hormuz: The Centre of Portuguese Rule in the Gulf

Having briefly outlined Portuguese political structures and authority in the East, we must now turn our attention to their character and operation in the Gulf. This immediately raises the issue of Portuguese intentions in the region. Given the wide dispersion of Portugal's interests, they came to rule each part of their empire separately from the others. The administration of Hormuz was still a reflection of that in Goa,¹⁹ but not in the style of rule. As we have seen, in Hormuz most of the commercial assets belonging to the local ruler were placed under direct Portuguese control, including the collection of *alfândega*. Systems were also set up to stop the growth of Arab trade in regions of the Gulf outside Portugal's direct control. On the other hand, much of Hormuz's day-to-day political administration was left in the hands of the king, arguably as an exercise in public relations.

In reassessing the Portuguese presence in the Gulf, there is a fact which should be closely considered here. It was observed above that the Portuguese did not enlarge the kingdom of Hormuz – not even by taking Basra, the main port at the head of the Gulf.²⁰ One of their few offensive campaigns was the attempt to secure sources of fresh water for Hormuz by controlling Gambroon and Qishm, and this ended in failure. Thus, the kingdom remained as it had been in the early fifteenth century.

¹⁷ See M. L. G. da Cruz, *A Governação de D. João III: A Fazenda Real e os seus Vedores* (Lisbon, 2001).

¹⁸ *The Lusiads of Camões*, trans and ed. J. J. Aubertin, (London, 1878) vol. I, p.xv; Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 81.

¹⁹ Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 120.

²⁰ Refer to Chapter One, section 4, pp. 79-81.

Why, then, did the Portuguese not extend the kingdom of Hormuz, while they were able to occupy Goa, Malacca and other places further East? Perhaps the Portuguese were initially constrained by poor intelligence about the Gulf's politics and economy. When Al-Hasa and Qatif fell into the hands of Rashid bin Mugamis (or Ale Mageme) in 1525, the Portuguese did nothing because they were not ruled by Hormuz, but had only occasionally been under its authority. It also seems that they consciously wanted to avoid becoming embroiled in peripheral problems, particularly those concerning the Arab tribes. Bin Mugamis defeated the last ruler of Al-Juboor in the eastern Arabian Peninsula, which eventually facilitated the passing of the lands to Ottoman domination between 1550 and 1552.²¹ Likewise, when the Safavids occupied territory in the northern Gulf in 1508 and installed governors there,²² the Portuguese did little except through diplomatic channels, resulting in a treaty with Shah Ismail in 1515 guaranteeing the security of Hormuz.²³ The peoples of Khūzistān and southern Iraq subsequently threw off Persian rule with little intervention from the Portuguese.

Here, in laying bare the essential character of Portuguese Hormuz, three points should be considered. First, that with the takeover of the *alfândega*, real political and economic power in Hormuz and the Gulf transferred to the Portuguese Crown's representatives on the spot. The king of Hormuz derived his authority from the viceroy in Goa, both symbolically and practically.²⁴ It is telling, for example, that the king was not allowed to go out with his retinue without first obtaining permission from the captain of Hormuz.²⁵ The viceroy allowed the appointment of a new king, and the

²¹ A. N. Al-Humaidan, *The Social and Political History of the Provinces of Baghdad and Basra from 1688 to 1749*, PhD. Thesis (Manchester, 1975), pp. 6, 10-15.

²² R. Q. M. Merkhund, *Tareakh Rawdet Al-safa Nasri* (Tehran, 1339 H.), vol. 8, p. 23.

²³ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. IV, pp.153-54; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, pp. 312-14.

²⁴ Godinho, *Os Descobrimientos e a Economia Mundial*, vol. 2, p. 162; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. 2, pp. 74-5; Botelho, *Estado de Tombo*, pp. 76-8.

²⁵ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 194.

nominee had to travel to Goa to have political authority conferred on him in a ceremony at the viceroy's court.²⁶ In a variation of this system, sometimes the Portuguese captain in the fortress of Hormuz conferred authority on a relative of the deceased king at a ceremony in the Portuguese fortress. The new king swore allegiance to the king of Portugal and received the royal insignia from the hands of the Portuguese captain.²⁷

Second, the main purpose of the Portuguese in capturing Hormuz was not to create a new Portuguese city in the Gulf, as happened in Goa.²⁸ The object was to acquire an urban base from which to wrest control of the sea routes and the trade which passed along them from their Asian competitors.

Third, Portuguese colonisation in the Gulf was unlike that in West Africa and India, or in Malacca and Macao. The Gulf saw merely conquest, not colonisation simple control and domination. Hormuz, which exercised authority over most parts of the Gulf, was not like Goa. Almost from the beginning of Portugal's contact with the Indian Ocean, Goa was the formal centre of empire in the region. Its sixteenth-century prosperity was a result of Portuguese policies,²⁹ while Hormuz was thriving economically before the Portuguese arrived.

Taking these points together, we can see that Hormuz was dissimilar to Goa and Malacca. The former cities were directly ruled by Portuguese colonists after they had driven out the local rulers and replaced them by force with military governors.³⁰ Hormuz, in contrast, possessed political, strategic and economic advantages of great importance, and the implications of its place at the hub of the Gulf and its expansive

²⁶ Qāemmaqame, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 32.

²⁷ Botelho, *Estado de Tombo*, p. 78.

²⁸ When Albuquerque attacked Goa in November 1510, he killed about 6,000 of its Muslim inhabitants. He opened a slave market in Goa to sell captives. Through this process of 'cleansing' he desired to create a new Portuguese city without Muslims. See R. P. Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961* (Bombay, 1963), p. 31.

²⁹ Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 135.

³⁰ Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961*, p. 32.

trade networks either compelled or convinced the Portuguese to exercise authority through native rulers. It is true that most of the commercial activities belonging to the local ruler were placed in the hands of the king of Portugal, and from 1507 the Portuguese required the king of Hormuz to recognize the authority of the Portuguese throne over him and his kingdom; but they did not substantially alter the kingdom's political system, or even its economic organisation.³¹ The direction of foreign policy in Hormuz and command of its military forces remained in the hands of the Portuguese captains. No attempt was made to reorganise the society and economy they encountered. They made influential Muslims and others in Hormuz responsible for religious affairs. Hormuz itself gave the Portuguese control of the Straits, and with that the Portuguese were content.³²

It is within this context that we should consider the political situation in the Gulf in the period covered by this study. The Portuguese realised at the time of their arrival that they could avoid direct occupation, which might only lead to the ruin of Hormuz and the collapse of its trade. For this reason under the guidance of Albuquerque a policy of indirect rule was preferred.³³ Interestingly, there is no evidence of rebellion in Hormuz after the first important outbreak of 1521. Thereafter, the only complaints came from merchants in the city or from the kings and their viziers. Most of the citizens in the city of Hormuz were traders or officials of the *alfândega*, and it seems that most of the time they were content under Portuguese authority.

Thus far it has been established that the Portuguese presence in the Gulf was geared towards economic domination more than anything else, reflecting early assessments of

³¹ Danvers, *Report on the India Office Records Related to Persia and the Persian Gulf* (London, n.d.), p. 9.

³² Couto, *Décadas*, vol. I, liv. ix, pp. 81-4.

³³ Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. IV, pp. 391-92.

the value and costs of occupying Hormuz. At the same time, the practice of Portuguese government in Hormuz, as elsewhere in the *Estado da Índia*, remained essentially military, to support the economic infrastructure. As a consequence the majority of the Portuguese in the Gulf, and particularly in Hormuz, were registered as soldiers,³⁴ and were paid, as shown in Table 3.1 (below), when they were paid at all, by the Portuguese Crown.³⁵ There was no fixed or permanent military organisation and the soldiers had no alternative but to attach themselves to individual *fidalgos*, who thus acquired their own armed retinues. In the Portuguese navy in the Gulf, as in India, there were two commanders responsible for the ports and fortresses. The first was the *capitão da fortaleza* (captain of the fortress). The second was the captain of the armada of Hormuz. The authority of the captain of the fortress was limited to the area where he ruled, in this case to the troops stationed at Hormuz. In practice, however, because Portuguese officers were so few in number, most of the time the captain had authority from Goa to secure the entire Gulf against rebellion, often with assistance from the captain of the armada of Hormuz. A second category of commander was the *capitão-mór* (chief captain), like Albuquerque and other Portuguese governors in the East. The third category consisted of *capitão-mór do mar* (captains of the sea) who were responsible for maritime security, whether around Hormuz, Arabia or Malacca.³⁶ In addition, the crown sometimes conferred new military titles on commanders by royal grant, like that which was given to Ruy Freyre de Andrada in 1618 – *de geral mar de Ormuz e costa da*

³⁴ In the fortress of Hormuz there were about 400 soldiers, 30 guards and 40 relatives of the captain, as well as 10 ships with 350 soldiers and 440 sailors under the commander of the Portuguese armada in the Gulf. See A. B. de Sousa, *Subsídios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia* (Lisbon, 1953), vol. III, p. 637.

³⁵ The *Corpo Coronológico* lists the payments made to administrators in Hormuz between 1515 and 1517. There were about 160 persons, 154 of them called *homem de armas* (men at arms) or captains. Most of the Portuguese officials in the Gulf were soldiers, not civilians. See ANTT, CC, III, maço 6, doc. 24, 54, 63.

³⁶ For more details see G. Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, p. 463; Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente Índia*, vol. I, p. 282. It should be noted that *capitão-mor* was sometimes synonymous with *capitão-mór do mar*.

Pérsia e Arábia – ‘if he took care of its organisation and equipment’.³⁷ Such titles were not part of the regular command structure, but were given to reward and encourage commanders like Ruy Freyre, whose strong leadership, the crown believed, would overcome the weakness of the Portuguese position in the Gulf.

The number of Portuguese captains and officials in Hormuz, especially in its fortress, increased after Manuel I decided to put Portuguese officials in the *alfândega* to control the island’s imports and exports. By the reign of João III they outnumbered Hormuzian officials. Appointment depended on status. Captaincies were given to members of the Portuguese nobility, factor positions to ‘knights’, and places in the secretariat to members of the royal household.³⁸

Table 3.1. Pay Scales at the Fortress of Hormuz (c.1571-1581)

Position	Reis per year
Captain	600,000
Alcaid (commander)	100,000
Judge	50,000
Factor	100,000
Clerks	50,000
Administrator of the royal warehouse	30,000
Clerk of the cells	20,000
Bailiff of fortress	24,000
Chief constable	46,000
Master of the arsenal	40,000
Master of the smithy	27,000
Bailiff of the treasury	25,000

Sources: *DRI*, tomo I, pp. 55-6; *O Orçamento do Estado da Índia 1571*, ed. A.T. de Matos (Lisbon, 1999); idem, ed., *O Estado da Índia non anos de 1581-1588* (Ponta Delgada, 1982).

The table above shows that there were definite pay scales marked out for the officials at the fortress. The fortress also had physicians, surgeons and apothecaries.

³⁷ A. Sousa, *Subsídios para a História Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 76.

³⁸ Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. IX, pp. 583-84; *DRI*, tomo I, pp. 55-6.

After the treaty of 1523, the kings of Hormuz were forbidden to raise any troops beyond a bodyguard in the royal place.³⁹

Thus, Hormuz had its captain, *Ouvidor*,⁴⁰ *Ouvidor Geral*⁴¹ and *Provedor mor*.⁴²

Unlike Goa or other colonial cities, however, there was no high court or *Senado da Câmara*.⁴³ The Portuguese in Hormuz therefore established a protectorate, permitting the king to remain in place, even though they gradually encroached on his revenue-base.⁴⁴

Further differences can be identified between Hormuz and other Portuguese settlements. Whereas the mixed marriage policy in Goa committed the Portuguese to the city and helped to ensure their presence there for centuries,⁴⁵ it was difficult to carry out a similar policy in the Gulf region. Albuquerque tried, but found it impossible, since most of the inhabitants were Muslims in contrast to Goa's largely Hindu population.⁴⁶ Thus, single Portuguese soldiers could not stay for a long time in Hormuz or Bahrain or any part of the Gulf, simply because they could not marry native Muslim women,

³⁹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 266.

⁴⁰ *Ouvidor*: One who acts as the king's eyes and ears; an intelligence agent. See Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. IV, p. 391.

⁴¹ 'General listener' – a superior judge. Russell-Wood, *Government and governance of European empires, 1450-1800*, p. pxli.

⁴² The 'main supplier'.

⁴³ Municipal or town council. In Hormuz there was a local council before the Portuguese arrived. For the system of Portuguese *Senado da Câmara* see: G. B. Sousa, 'Portuguese Country Traders in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea', *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien, Middle East & Indian Ocean XVI' - XIX' s.*, no.1 (Paris, 1984), pp. 118-19; A. Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. II, p. 7.

⁴⁴ S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500- 1700*, p. 78.

⁴⁵ Official intermarriages began in Goa in 1510 according to Albuquerque's strategy. During Albuquerque's rule, more than five hundred marriages took place between Portuguese soldiers and Hindu women in Goa. See Rao, *Portuguese Rule in Goa 1510-1961*, p. 31. In the sixteenth century there were about 2,000 *casados*, including former Portuguese or Eurasian Portuguese soldiers who married Hindu women. For more about marriage policy see Goertz, 'From territorial borders to an <inner frontier>', p. 95; Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 296; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 176-77; A. Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. 1, p. 250.

⁴⁶ Only one marriage is mentioned between a Portuguese captain and a woman from Hormuz. She was a Hormuzian princess. This occurred during Matias de Albuquerque's tenure as captain of Hormuz (1584-87). See J. Wicki, 'Matias de Albuquerque, 16.º vice-rei da Índia 1591-1597' *Stvdia*, 48 (1989), pp. 85-6. The princess in question ran away to Goa and married the Portuguese captain there. This event was mentioned by Van Linschoten. See *The Travels of Van Linschoten*, vol. I, pp. 187-88.

although there were one or two cases of such liaisons. In contrast, in Goa and Malacca Portuguese *casados* with the native women increased to hundreds by 1580.⁴⁷

A second feature of Portuguese conquests elsewhere was the process by which they tried to Europeanize them and convert them into replicas of the places they knew at home.⁴⁸ Hormuz, however, was an exception. The Portuguese did not dispossess its rulers, and they had no intention of extending its size and power. They regarded the city and kingdom as a 'milk cow' to support the *Estado da Índia*. As we have seen, as late as 1610 Hormuz was providing financial support to Goa to the tune of 45,000 *ashrafi* (30,000 *pardaus*).⁴⁹

3. 2. Rulers and Ruled in Hormuz

Portuguese policy towards the Gulf can be divided into two stages. The first phase was from 1515 to 1580 under Portuguese control, and the second from 1580 until the fall of Hormuz in 1622, under the Spanish-Portuguese Union.

In the first phase, Portuguese treatment of the people in the Gulf was determined largely by Albuquerque's attitude towards them. His influence extended long beyond his death in 1515. It is well known that Albuquerque's attitude against the people always took the form of a terrible revenge. The *Commentaries*, though oddly not Muslim accounts, describe Albuquerque's bombardment of the rich and prosperous ports from south Oman to Hormuz island, the firing of houses, plundering of warehouses, slaughter of inhabitants, and the mutilation of men, women and children.⁵⁰ He also butchered crews of captured Arab and Muslim vessels.⁵¹ Albuquerque himself, in his letters to

⁴⁷ *Portuguese Asia: aspects in history and economic history 'sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'* ed. R. Ptak, (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 37-57.

⁴⁸ Marques, *History of Portugal*, vol. 1, p. 250.

⁴⁹ BNL-FG, codice no. 1975, Carta de Ruy Lourenço de Távora para Filipe II (1610), pp. 364-65.

⁵⁰ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, pp. 71, 79-80. He also did similar thing in the Indian cities like Goa in 1512. See Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, p. 125.

⁵¹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 126.

Manuel, expressed his refusal to be a tax-gatherer.⁵² His predominant motive was that of conquest, which, as he understood it, was ‘defeating the enemy’.⁵³ We can only guess if the literary image of Albuquerque’s actions was a true reflection or an embroidered projection for an audience with a penchant for the heroic and the fervent. However, exaggeration or not, the behaviour attributed to Albuquerque – neither ordered nor sanctioned by the Portuguese government in Lisbon – nonetheless set a stamp on the Portuguese empire in the East.

Albuquerque died in 1515, but Portuguese policy in the Gulf, and even in the Indian Ocean, remained the same as it had been during his period of command.⁵⁴ The Portuguese presence depended on the traditional military system which was based on the army, commanded by the nobility. However, that system showed itself to be unsuitable for Albuquerque’s purposes, as he discovered in Hormuz in 1508. He therefore endeavoured to create organised and professionally-led bodies of troops.⁵⁵ Having confidence in his nephew Pero, Albuquerque appointed him as the first *capitão da fortaleza de Ormuz* (1515-18) to implement his strategic policy in the Gulf.⁵⁶ This policy seemed to be a simple one: to control the ports and their trade by naval power and bases at strategic points, and, where expedient, to contract alliances with rulers of important coastal areas. The territory surrounding the fortresses was dominated by means of the artillery and troops in them.

The main problem with Portuguese policy after the discoveries was that it mainly depended on use of the force in dealing with events and people, not on peaceful co-operation. This was so in the Gulf, as well as in the East. That policy derived, in part, from the Iberian background of armed conflict and the practice of fanatical Christianity

⁵² Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, pp. 97, 101.

⁵³ Crone, *The Discovery of the East*, pp. 50-2.

⁵⁴ K. M. Panikkar, *A Survey of Indian History* (London, 1971), pp. 198-99.

⁵⁵ Thomas, ‘Factions, interests and messianism’, p. 104.

⁵⁶ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. II, liv. x, p. 419; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 165.

during the *Reconquista*, an example being commander Ruy Gonçalves's action in sending vessels to attack Nakhelu on the Persian coast in 1585.⁵⁷ In addition, between 1620 and 1622 Ruy Freire attacked Bandar Kung, Khasab and Sir on the Persian coast, and Julfar on the Arabian coast, killed the Arabs there, and plundered the places.⁵⁸

From the revolt of 1521 until 1580, the kings of Hormuz suffered greatly from the treatment of local Portuguese captains, and also the viceroys and governors in Goa. Moreover, every trace of civic influence disappeared under Portuguese rule. Although the economic position of Hormuz was mostly healthy, the Portuguese in their dealings with the kings and people were unreasonable, as will be demonstrated elsewhere in this thesis.

However, it should be kept in mind that in Portuguese settlements, private merchants and crown officials were often the same people.⁵⁹ This aspect of Portuguese policy can be observed in the Gulf. Instead of the officials effectively administering the kingdom of Hormuz, the captains and soldiers turned to trading for their own interest. In this case, staple rights, right of pre-emption, and the sole right of transport along certain routes reverted to the captains.⁶⁰ For this reason, for instance, the Portuguese in Hormuz refused to help the king when he asked them to restore several rebellious trade centres, despite the knowledge that they owed allegiance to the kingdom. Captains often gave as their reason for refusal the lack of resources in the Gulf.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. II, pp. 61-2.

⁵⁸ C. R. Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada* (London, 1929), pp. 47-9.

⁵⁹ Thomas, 'Factions, interests and messianism', p. 106.

⁶⁰ *DUP*, vol. II, p. 333. This is perhaps one of the few glimpses of concession voyages in the Gulf. See above, pp. 105-6 for an outline of this practice.

⁶¹ ANTT, *A G.*, vol. I, Gav. ii, 10-17- Carta de Bernardim de Sousa a D. João III a respeito dos turcos e da guerra de Ormuz, Goa, 1545, Novembro, 20. p. 916.

Both political and economic factors, then, were routinely fused together in the Portuguese Gulf. This can be demonstrated by events that took place in Hormuz during the long governorship of Nuno da Cunha.⁶²

In May 1529 da Cunha was in Muscat on his way to India to take up his office. From Muscat he was accompanied to Hormuz by Shaikh Rashid Al-Muscati, a good friend to the Portuguese there.⁶³ Rashid had complained to da Cunha that the vizier of Hormuz, Reis Sharaf Al-Din Al-Fāli,⁶⁴ had demanded 20,000 *ashrafi* as an outstanding tax on goods that he had exported to him from Hormuz. He added that Sharaf Al-Din had encouraged his brother, Delawar Shah, to revolt against the Portuguese in 1521 on the coast of Oman.⁶⁵ The viceroy, who was aware of Rashid's loyalty, accepted this story. Some Iranian writers have criticised Al-Muscati because he came to Hormuz on a warship under Portuguese protection and claimed that he had a right to Hormuz's ministry.⁶⁶ It would appear that viceroy da Cunha was playing a very dangerous game in Hormuz at this time by trying to inflame the chronic struggle between the Arabs and the Persians.

Da Cunha arrested Sharaf Al-Din just after he arrived at Hormuz, with the excuse that he had acted as a tyrant over the king of Hormuz, Mohammed Shah II.⁶⁷ He did not offer any proof to support this accusation; but the reality was that Sharaf Al-Din was acting against Portuguese authority in Hormuz by seeking to pursue a more independent policy for his country. In this he stood against the captain of Hormuz, Diogo de Melo (1524-1528), who was appointed to his position just after the declaration

⁶² Son of Tristoão da Cunha, one of the first wave of important Portuguese commanders during the discoveries.

⁶³ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. IV, liv. vi, p. 61.

⁶⁴ In Portuguese, *Rais Xarāfo guazil de alfândega*.

⁶⁵ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. IV, liv. iv, pp. 31-2; Qāemmaqāmi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 34.

⁶⁶ E. Abaas, *Mutalati Derbab Bahrain Wa Jazair Khaleej Fārs* (Tehran, 1939), pp. 64, 67; Qāemmaqāmi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 34.

⁶⁷ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. IV, liv. vi, pp. 17-8; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 396.

of 1521 to install Portuguese officials in the *alfândega*.⁶⁸ Sharaf Al-Din aroused further hostility by accusing de Melo of shipping goods in royal vessels on his own account – a common enough form of petty abuse among officials.⁶⁹ When Sharaf Al-Din complained about de Melo's attitude the captain responded in kind, and, as a result, in 1529 da Cunha sent the vizier out to Goa and then to Lisbon as a prisoner. The ministry of Hormuz was given to Rashid Al-Muscatti in 1530.⁷⁰ We may note this as the point when ministerial authority in Hormuz passed into Arab hands: Al-Muscatti was the first Arab vizier in the political history of the kingdom.⁷¹

It may be wondered why the Portuguese installed Al-Muscatti, in spite of their espoused intention of displacing Arabs from their political and economic positions in the East. Perhaps the answer can be found in the new 'policy' of Portuguese governors, such as Lopo Soares and Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, who wanted to trade with and fight against the Muslims simultaneously. In addition, they hoped to encourage other Arabs like Al-Muscatti to work as their agents.⁷² Their actions suggest a shift away from the rather one-dimensional relationship of Albuquerque's time between the Portuguese and the Muslims. Pragmatism, perhaps fostered by self-interest, began to exert a greater influence on Portugal's position in the region. This was most obvious in her dealings with the Persians. In this case, however, the intervention in local politics provoked a

⁶⁸ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. IV, Gav. xv, 1-60, Carta de João Arrais a el-rei na qual lhe dava conta dos rendimentos das alfândegas em Ormuz, 1528, Julho 10, pp. 80-84; *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado português do Oriente*, vol. IV, pp. 389-90, 396.

⁶⁹ Evidence can be found in the letter from Cristóvão de Mendonça to João III about this matter. See ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, Carta de Cristóvão de Mendonça a el-rei D. João III na qual lhe conta os acontecimentos e inimizades da Índia e o estado da fortaleza, p. 255; See also, De Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa*, pp. 166-67, 169-70, and Appendix II, below.

⁷⁰ A. Farinha, *Os Portugueses no Golfo Pérsico*, p. 32.

⁷¹ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 256. Shaikh Rashid's son, Ahmed, took the position after him, and after that it returned to the Hormuzians. Qäemmaqami, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 41.

⁷² There is a letter that shows the success of this project. It was sent by Al-Muscatti and includes information about Turkish movements against the Portuguese navy in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. This letter was sent to João III, not to Manuel I as stated in the Portuguese translation. From internal evidence the letter can be dated to 937 H (1532) when Al-Muscatti was in office in Hormuz. See De Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa*, letter no. xi, pp. 48-53.

rebellion in Bahrain in 1529. Da Cunha sent his brother to put down the revolt, but he was unsuccessful.⁷³ The governor then retired to India, leaving the political situation in Hormuz at best unresolved and arguably more awkward.

These events also highlight the use of ‘hostages’ in the Gulf. Following his deposition as vizier, Sharaf Al-Din was sent to Portugal as a political prisoner.⁷⁴ He was kept away from Hormuz for about fifteen years from 1530 to 1545.⁷⁵ The Portuguese also seized all of his assets, leaving his family in great hardship, as is clear from extant letters between him and his son.⁷⁶ This shows the importance of Sharaf Al-Din in the politics of Hormuz and the fear that the Portuguese authorities had of his influence there. Indeed, events in Hormuz – including the arrest of Sharaf Al-Din – had the potential to influence other parts of the Gulf; the revolution of 1521 and the Bahrain rebellion in 1529 are evidence of that.

There is another possible explanation for the arrest of Sharaf Al-Din which sheds further light on the relationship between politics and the local economy. Mohammed Shah II and Sharaf Al-Din made several complaints about economic matters in Hormuz – especially after the annual tribute payable by the Shah was increased to 100,000 *ashrafi*⁷⁷ – but received no response from the Portuguese

⁷³ See Chapter Four, section 1, for details of this revolt.

⁷⁴ De Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa*, p. 165.

⁷⁵ *Carats de D. João de Castro a D. João III*, ed. L. De Albuquerque, (Lisbon, 1989), pp. 52-53; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 397. More than one letter was sent by Sharaf Al-Din sons to João III, requesting him to release their father, and also another letter to their father personally. See Qāemmaqami, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 35.

⁷⁶ It seems that João de Castro, governor of India (1545-1548), made some attempts to liberate Sharaf Al-Din from his prison in Lisbon and return him to Goa and Hormuz. Ultimately when de Castro left Lisbon in the middle of March 1545 Sharaf Al-Din was with him. There are also two letters from Sharaf Al-Din to Luís Falcão, captain of Hormuz, mentioning the hospitality that João de Castro gave to him in Lisbon and of the help that he received to return to Goa. These letters were written in October 1545. Perhaps the disgraced vizier was returned to Hormuz in November 1546, as suggested in the *Regulamento da vida indígena em Ormuz* (Regulation of native life in Hormuz). See ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 7-11, 12, Carta de Reis Xarafa ao infante D. Luís respeito do bom acolhimento que lhe fizera D. João de Castro, 1545, Outubro, 8, pp. 592-93; Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, vol. IV, pp. 389-92; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 302.

⁷⁷ For more details see Corriea, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. IV, p. 274; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 223.

authorities.⁷⁸ In 1528 this prompted the king and his vizier to seek assistance (*socorro*) from Istanbul,⁷⁹ however the written appeal was intercepted before it left Hormuz by Mir Mahmud Shah and the port officials.⁸⁰ The Portuguese authorities naturally viewed this as a treasonable act. For his dealings with the Turks Mohammad Shah II was arrested and sent out to India, but later returned to Hormuz. Some time later, in 1532, Mohammed wrote to João III complaining of the behaviour of Portuguese officials in Hormuz, especially the captain Martim Afonso de Mello,⁸¹ as well as officials in Goa.⁸² In fact, the Portuguese regime, whether in Portugal or in India, did not respect the people in their empire, regardless of their status, whether they were kings or peasants.

Whatever their cause, these events in Hormuz between 1529 and 1530 were extremely important, as the arrest of Sharaf Al-Din and the ill treatment of Mohammed Shah II had a serious impact on Portugal's political position in the Gulf. For a further fifteen years, especially when occupied by the sons of Sharaf Al-Din and Rashid Al-Muscati, the position of the vizier of Hormuz was troubled by a continuing rift between the Arabs and the Hormuzians.⁸³

From 1529 there are significant gaps in the political history of Hormuz. For information about local events we are mostly dependent on Portuguese sources and historians.

⁷⁸ This complaint letter exists now in ANTT under the title of '*Documentos Orientais*', *Arabes Docs. Golfo Pérsico*, maço I, microfilm, no. 457, h-º 28. There are other letters from the kings of Hormuz. Some are in Arabic and others in Persian. This is evidence that such letters had been written more than once and did not get any reply from Lisbon, perhaps because they took a long time to arrive in Portugal via Goa, or because they were received but ignored by Portuguese clerks.

⁷⁹ A translation of this letter into Portuguese is extant in the ANTT; *Cartas dos Vice-Reis da India*, no. 82.

⁸⁰ ANTT, *Cartas dos Vice-Reis da India*, no. 82, 3-a.

⁸¹ Martim Afonso de Mello Jusarte. He served as captain of Hormuz twice, first from 1535 to 1537, and then from 1538 to 1545.

⁸² De Sousa, *Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa*, letter no. XLVIII, pp. 162-64. 'Não obtante isto, levantarão-se os inimigos contra mim o mais que poderão. E me fizerão sahir do paiz, e me mandarão para Goa, desattendêrão á minha propria pessoa e vilipendiãrão o meu respeito, e decóro publicamente'.

⁸³ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 256; vol. I, Gav. ii, 10-17, Carta do Bernardim de Sousa a D. João III a respeito dos turcos e da guerra de Ormuz, p. 916.

In this respect, there is some confusion about events in the period from 1530 to 1545, especially during the reigns of the Arab viziers Rashid Al-Muscati and his son Ahmed. In general it seems that the king of Hormuz and the commercial party refused to deal with the Arabs. As Cristóvão de Mendonça stated in this matter, ‘this Muslim – Rashid Al-Muscati – was not born in these islands so he is unable to govern this kingdom, because he is very diffident and afraid’.⁸⁴ There seems to have been a realisation by the Portuguese that they should return the ministry of Hormuz to a native. On that basis, in 1545, in a rather ironic *volte face*, they appointed Nor Al-Din Al-Fāli, the son of the exiled Sharaf Al-Din, as vizier.⁸⁵ Perhaps this family had professional experience in ruling the kingdom, and as leaders of the Persian commercial party in Hormuz they had extensive contacts with both sides of the Gulf and mainland Persia. In addition, the Portuguese must have sought to placate local opinion in the city.

Yet such instances of discretion and reconciliation were few in number. More typically the European rulers in the Gulf acted without any apparent diplomatic planning or knowledge of local affairs. Evidence can be found in a letter of 1545 from Reis Rukn Al-Din,⁸⁶ vizier of Hormuz, to Sharaf Al-Din concerning attempts by the king of Al-Hasa to gain control of Bahrain, Qatīf and Basra.⁸⁷ King Turan Shah IV and Rukn Al-Din appraised captain Martim Afonso de Mello of the threat and asked him to send a fleet to protect Bahrain, or to build a fortress at Qatīf to ensure Bahrain’s safety. De Mello claimed in response to have insufficient funds to mount such an expedition. He instead suggested that the best way for the governor of Bahrain to equip a defence fleet would be to confiscate the revenues and profits of the Persian merchants who lived

⁸⁴ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 256.

⁸⁵ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. II, liv. iv, pp. 164-65; *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado português do Oriente*, vol. IV, p. 389.

⁸⁶ In Portuguese, *de Rei Rocan Adim*..

⁸⁷ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. IV, Gav. xv, 11-2, Carta (traslado da) de Rei Rocan Adim, Alguazil de Ormuz, para Rei Xarafo, 1545?, pp. 357-59.

there.⁸⁸ That such an insensitive solution was offered to the governor of Bahrain by the chief Portuguese captain in the Gulf tells us much about the mentality of Portuguese officials.⁸⁹ Consequently, Turan Shah had to undertake to bear the costs of the campaign.⁹⁰

The unpredictable treatment of Hormuz's rulers was mirrored in Portuguese dealings with other groups around the Gulf. Sometimes, as noted in the case of Nor Al-Din, the captains of Hormuz could be very diplomatic in their actions. During the vice-regency of João de Castro, for instance, Luís Falcao kept up good relations with the Arab tribes in Basra who stood with the Portuguese against the Turks. Their chieftain, Ali bin Ūlyaan, regarded the Portuguese as 'friends' (*há muitos tempos que tivemos amizade*).⁹¹ Then again, there were occasions when the Arabs were treated with contempt and met the arbitrary face of Portuguese rule, as when Belchior Tavares de Sousa arrived in southern Iraq in 1529. Also, the Portuguese were similarly harsh with Persian rulers in Lār and Shiraz, especially in relation to the annual *muqarrariya* which the former had to pay to protect the caravan routes via Persia. They refused to pay several times, which contributed to the crisis of Hormuz in 1622.⁹²

Such inconsistencies, compounded by lack of evidence, make it difficult to understand Portuguese policy in this period. The captains are important as a gauge of policy because they were the men on the ground and had some discretion in their dealings with local leaders.

For the most part, it seems that the captains involved themselves in the political game for their personal benefit. They deposed kings and elected the sons of other kings

⁸⁸ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. IV, Gav. xv, 11-2, p. 359.

⁸⁹ See the letter in Appendix II, translated from the Portuguese, and also translated from the Persian original. This is the translation which was sent to the king of Portugal. At this time we do not know the whereabouts of the original; I could not find it in the ANTT.

⁹⁰ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. I, Gav. ii, 10-17, p. 916.

⁹¹ *Cart. Ormuz*, f. 115 v. Al-Ūlyaan in Basra was from the Al- Muntafiq tribe.

⁹² *Livro das Monções*, pp. 218-19.

and placed them on the throne. This happened more than once, in 1534 and 1563.⁹³ However, there was one positive political result of Portuguese rule in Hormuz. Decades of blood feud inside the royal family had weakened the power of the state in the Gulf and on the coast of Oman; the arrival of the Portuguese ended this instability and prevented the kingdom from falling into the hands of its neighbours, whether Lār or Safavid Persia.⁹⁴ Still, the presence of the Portuguese was not the only reason for this. After the occupation, the crown of Hormuz was worth little after its revenues had been channelled into the Portuguese treasury. But even if their power was nominal, and they were forced to be vassals to a distant king, at least the succession of the Hormuzian kings was preserved during the Portuguese occupation.

3. 3. Portuguese Diplomacy in the Gulf: Relations with the Local Powers

Whether measured in territory or revenues, to a large extent the success of Portugal's 'Hormuz-centred policy' depended on local knowledge and the uses to which it was put. The practical implications of this were considerable. The Portuguese not only had to build and maintain fortresses in the city itself, but they also had to take responsibility for the management of the kingdom. Furthermore, their physically tenuous presence in the Gulf was also dependent on the alignment of other forces outside of Hormuz. Within the kingdom, high-handedness, miscomprehension, corruption and complacency could all be borne by the dominant military power there; yet when these weaknesses exhibited

⁹³ The first king appointed by the Portuguese was Salgur Shah II, the son of Mohammed Shah II after the latter's death in 1534. The captain of Hormuz, António da Silveira, elected his son in his place. Pedro de Sousa, captain from 1562, appointed Ferrug Shah to the throne, probably in the years 1563-64, see *A PO*, fasc. 5, part I, pp. 693, 758-60.

⁹⁴ In 1582 Hormuz faced enmity from the king of Lār who had resolved to take Mughistān on the Persian coast near the seaboard of Hormuz. Having entered Mughistān, close investment prevented any supplies from being taken into Hormuz. Gonçalo de Meneses, the captain of Hormuz at that time, gave assistance to Turan Shah VI. He took effective military action against the assault and took over *Xamel* fort in Lār. The king of Lār died during the bombardment of the fort. The Safavid rulers tried several times to capture or destroy Hormuz island in the sixteenth century. See A. Sousa, *Subsídios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*. vol. I, pp. 105-6; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. II, pp. 45-7.

themselves in the Gulf at large, and affected Portuguese diplomacy there, the vulnerability of Portugal's position became all too apparent. Outside the kingdom of Hormuz, difficulties came from the extent of the rivalry between the Ottomans, who were sometimes aided by Arab Muslims in the Gulf region, and the Persians, who had ambitions to become a maritime-commercial power.⁹⁵

The most important of Portugal's relationships was with the rulers of Safavid Persia. Persia could be counted as Portugal's first ally among the region's Islamic powers. Just a few days after Albuquerque attacked Hormuz and obliged the king to sign the first treaty, the envoy of Shah Ismail reached the city to obtain the annual tribute due to Persia. Quite naturally, Albuquerque refused to pay because the kingdom of Hormuz had become a Portuguese dependency.⁹⁶ Because of this first hostile contact, in 1508 Ismail altered his plans: 'Shah Ismail sent an Embassy to the Captain-in-Chief of the king our lord with many presents, offering him alliance and peace, who received it very graciously, and sent in return another embassy and present.'⁹⁷ This event shows how relations began between the Portuguese and the Persian Shah after Albuquerque launched his second Hormuz campaign in 1508. This is described in Albuquerque's *Commentaries*, but a fuller account was given by Barros.⁹⁸

The second occasion on which Albuquerque came into contact with the Shah was in 1510, after he had taken Goa. In that year, relations between Persia and the Portuguese made real progress with the arrival of the first of the Shah's envoys in India.⁹⁹ Albuquerque gave a warm welcome to the envoy and suggested that the Persians needed his support against the Turks and the Mamluk Sultan. In this case it

⁹⁵ See Chapter Four, below.

⁹⁶ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 145.

⁹⁷ *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, pp. 86-7.

⁹⁸ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. II, liv. ii, pp. 33-4; *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. I, p. 145.

⁹⁹ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. II, p. 107.

seems that Albuquerque, as was common among Portuguese captains, lacked up-to-date knowledge about the progress of relations between the Mamluks and Safavid Persia, which reached a peak of friendship at the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁰ He added that the king of Portugal was at war with these powers, not only in the Indian Ocean but also in the Levant, and that he intended to send an embassy to Persia to propose an alliance. This he did in the person of Ruy Gomez.¹⁰¹ The importance that the Portuguese attached to their relations with the Safavids can be seen in Albuquerque's letter to the Shah. Quite simply, they depended on Persia for assistance against the other major Islamic powers in the East, the Ottomans and Mamluks.¹⁰²

Albuquerque's uncertainty about the alliance between himself and the Shah can be traced to the conflict of interests between Persia and Portugal. This was highlighted in the Portuguese occupation of Hormuz, which had paid a valuable *muqarrarīya* to Persia each year.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, the trajectory of the relationship was positive in the third contact with the Safavids, in 1513, after Albuquerque had returned to Goa from an unsuccessful expedition in the Red Sea.¹⁰⁴ Another exchange of envoys occurred.¹⁰⁵

Good relations between the Portuguese and Persians led to the establishment of a military alliance between them, principally as a result of Ismail's defeat by the Ottomans at the battle of Gāldirān (Jaldiran) in 1514.¹⁰⁶ This alliance was the product of

¹⁰⁰ O. Al-Eskandri and S. Hassan, *Tarekh Maser men Al-fatah Al-Osmani ela qbeel al-wqet al-hader* (Cairo, 1990), p. 37.

¹⁰¹ Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado português do Oriente*, vol. I, pp. 81-2.

¹⁰² BNL, FG, codice no. 297. fl. 17r, 171v; Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado português do Oriente*, vol. I, p. 261.

¹⁰³ See Chapter Two, section 1.

¹⁰⁴ R. Serjeant, *The Portuguese of the South Arabian Coast*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ For more details see Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 410-22 and *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. IV, p. 86. Both accounts focus on the valuable gifts he received from Shah Ismail. Barros gives only a short account of Miguel's embassy. See Barros, *Asia*, vol. II, liv. x, p. 220.

¹⁰⁶ R. Jaffariyān *Safwah as Duhwr ta Zawal 950–1135 H.D.* (Tehran, 1378 S.), pp. 137-38; P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, pp. 162-63; P. M. Savory, *Studies on the History of Safavid Iran*, pp. 74-5. The single most important factor in the Safavid defeat was the Ottoman artillery, supported by handguns.

a fourth contact, in 1515, following the permanent Portuguese occupation of Hormuz.¹⁰⁷ It seems that the Persians were willing to ally themselves fully with the Portuguese, as they promised to pay tribute to Manuel I.¹⁰⁸ A full account is given by Barros.¹⁰⁹ He mentions that in the year after the negotiations, the Persians made certain preliminary demands concerning trading rights, free passage to the Bahrain islands and to Qatîf, and the surrender of the trade dues of Hormuz. Albuquerque rejected the package as a whole but allowed free passage to Bahrain and Qatîf.¹¹⁰ He also agreed to assist the Shah's governor in Makran in recovering possession of the port of Gwadar from the Nodhaki who had defied the Shah's agents there. With the offer came a dictate that all Persian trade with India must come via Hormuz, and not Gwadar. Though driving a hard bargain, Albuquerque was still anxious to sign a treaty with the Shah. For that purpose he sent Fernão Gomez de Lemos to offer Portuguese support against the Ottomans.¹¹¹ In the end negotiations broke down with the sudden death of Albuquerque. The project was dropped by his successor, Lopo Soares.¹¹²

One Arab writer notes that the agreement between Albuquerque and Ismail, even though it was not carried out, opened the way for the Persians to stay in Basra from 1508 until 1546, when it was conquered by the Turks.¹¹³ He does not, however, give any evidence for his belief that the Safavid regime in Basra was in alliance with the

As a consequence the Safavids looked for an alliance with the Portuguese to help them acquire artillery.

¹⁰⁷ Rego, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado português do Oriente*. vol. I, pp. 261-62, *Embaixada ao Xequê Ismael, 1515*; *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁸ BNL - FG, codice no. 7638, fl 59v.

¹⁰⁹ Barros, , *Ásia*, vol. II, liv. x, pp. 222-23.

¹¹⁰ *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. IV, pp. 176-77.

¹¹¹ Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 437-42.

¹¹² For more details see: Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 442-44; *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol. IV, pp. 150-59, 175-78; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 162; K. Jayne, *Vasco Da Gama and his Successors*, pp. 94-6.

¹¹³ A. Al-Anani, 'The Portuguese in Bahrain and its environs during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in *Bahrain through the Ages the History*, ed. A. K. Al-Khalifa and M. Rice (London and New York, 1993), p. 49.

Portuguese. It does seem, though, that Ismail painfully accepted the Portuguese occupation of Hormuz for two reasons: his lack of military power, especially a navy; and to bring the Portuguese into the Mediterranean conflict against the Turks. Therefore contact between the two powers continued, as in 1524 when Baltezar Pessoa arrived as ambassador from Portugal and met Ismail at Tabariz.¹¹⁴

The death of Ismail in the same year brought a temporary halt to the negotiations between them. Ismail's son and heir Tahmasb did not meet with Pessoa, who had remained in Persia.¹¹⁵ However, the Portuguese did not cease their efforts to draw the Safavids into an alliance against the other Muslim powers. Several potential clashes with Persia were avoided, especially in matters where the two powers' commercial interests overlapped. Portugal generally accommodated Persian claims for commercial facilities in the Gulf, but there remained matters of dispute. For example, both were aware of the importance of the Safavid port of Rayshahr which played a significant role in the regional economy. Its wealth and importance were rooted in the horse trade.¹¹⁶ The Portuguese were concerned about competition to Hormuz and so they encouraged Persian merchants to deal with Hormuz and Goa to reduce Rayshahr's traffic.¹¹⁷ The Portuguese were unwilling to allow a commercial dispute to jeopardize their alliance with the Persians, especially after the Turks reached the head of the Gulf in 1546 and Qatif in 1550 from where Portuguese control could be challenged. However, Portuguese

¹¹⁴ Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos e Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses*, liv. vi, pp. 223-25.

¹¹⁵ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 396. For relations during the reign of Tahmasb see also Jaffariyān *Safwah as Duhwr ta Zawal 950-1135 H.D.*, p. 138; Qäemmaqame, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 30.

¹¹⁶ L. Ribeiro, 'A viagem da Índia a Portugal por terra feita por António Tenreiro', *Stvdia*, 3 (1959), p. 117.

¹¹⁷ ANTT, *A G.*, vol. V, Gav. xv, 16-25, Carta de Tomé Serrão ao D. João III, Hormuz, 24 November 1550, pp. 39-40.

concerns over Rayshahr were not completely allayed until 1568 when the port lost its importance with the disappearance of its ruling family.¹¹⁸

The lesson of Rayshahr was that trade within the Gulf could prove divisive, but external threats to both Portuguese and Persian interests reinforced the importance of co-operation. The Turkish occupation of Basra in 1546 not only made the captain of Hormuz aware of further Turkish plans in the Gulf,¹¹⁹ but also prompted the Safavids to remain closely involved with the Portuguese until the beginning of seventeenth century.

During the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, who succeeded Shah Hamza Merza in 1587,¹²⁰ the king of the Spanish-Portuguese Union tried on several occasions to move relations with Persia forward, especially after the first Englishmen appeared on the Persian scene in 1598, and their influence on Persian policy became clear.¹²¹ Therefore, in 1603 another ambassador arrived from Madrid at the court of Abbas with the task of building a church in Persia.¹²² In 1606 Philip III wrote to the Shah, ostensibly about the satisfaction that he felt at the victories obtained over the Turks, and offered to help him in the war. In fact, Philip knew very well that the Shah had overcome the Turks alone and without the help of the Spanish or any other Christian rulers. The main reason for Philip's letter was to remind the Shah that the Portuguese had not forgotten their claim on Bahrain: the Shah was asked to instruct the sultan of Shiraz to hand Bahrain over to the king of Hormuz.¹²³ Moreover, in 1617, having expressed a desire to develop the silk trade, Shah Abbas requested that the Spanish should send him no more friars as

¹¹⁸ J. Aubin, 'La Politique iranienne d'Ormuz (1515-1540)', pp. 41-3.

¹¹⁹ L. Albuquerque, *Cartas de D. João de Castro a D. III*, pp. 121-22.

¹²⁰ Jaffariyān *Safwah as Duhwr ta Zawal 950-1135 H.D.*, pp. 180-83.

¹²¹ D. W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: The Strange Fortune of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons* (Ithaca, 1967), pp. 95-113.

¹²² A. Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*. Vol. I, p. 44.

¹²³ *Livro das Monções*, tomo IV, p. 151. The loss of Bahrain still exercised the Portuguese and until 1617 they reminded Shah Abbas about restoring the island. For example, in the letter sent from Philip III to the viceroy of India dated 21 March 1617, he said 'e antes de se firmar a paz podesseis recuperar Barem'.

ambassadors, but rather gentleman of note, ‘for he would better know how to treat with such any one, and his Majesty would be better served, because a religious man out of his cell was like a fish out of water’.¹²⁴ The Spaniard Garcia da Silva e Figueroa was sent in accordance with this request.¹²⁵ At the same time, the Shah dispatched Robert Sherley as an ambassador to Spain.¹²⁶ In spite of all this renewed contact, war broke out between the Persians and the Portuguese for reasons including the high tax that the Portuguese levied on the Gulf silk trade.¹²⁷ Abbas knew that as long as the Portuguese controlled Hormuz and its Strait, he could not take any action over trade routes in the Gulf. Soon afterwards the Shah came to terms with the Ottomans, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the crisis of the Portuguese in the Gulf emerged and then escalated. Interestingly, tensions between Persia and Portugal had little to do with religion – more mundane or worldly matters seem to have strained their relationship.

The other principal axis of Portuguese diplomacy in the Gulf was with Lārestān. This relationship revolved around a fixed annual tribute payable by Hormuz to the rulers of Lār, the *muqarrarīya*.¹²⁸ After the Safavids occupied Lārestān, the Portuguese administration ceased to comply with this time-honoured payment, because Lār became a part of Shiraz; but the Persians still argued that the *muqarrarīya* rightfully belonged to the Khān of Shiraz. It seems that whenever the Portuguese demanded Bahrain, the Persians laid emphasis on the *muqarrarīya*, to remind the Portuguese, their ‘enemy-friend’, that they were invaders with little rightful claim to territories in the Gulf. Quite frankly the Portuguese, with their inept diplomacy, failed to comprehend the significance of *muqarrarīya* and certainly never respected this traditional financial

¹²⁴ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xxii; Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p. 177.

¹²⁵ *Livro das Monções*, tomo IV, pp. 153-54.

¹²⁶ Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, pp. 228-29; Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p. 177.

¹²⁷ M. A. Samnane, *Shah Abbas Kabir*, (Tehran, 1373 S.), p. 111.

¹²⁸ See Chapter Two, section 1. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the *muqarrarīya* was worth 2,000 *cruzados* or about 4,500 *ashrafi*. See Table 2.3, and the Glossary.

arrangement, even though it represented a fairly modest sum. In 1606 the demand for *muqarrariya* was raised again by the Khān of Shiraz, and it was repeated in 1607 with great vehemence, and again in 1608.¹²⁹ The Portuguese refused to pay; and this refusal opened a rift with Lār.¹³⁰ This sparked off the first series of pre-emptive military engagements with the Safavids, which contributed to the fall of Hormuz.¹³¹

Moving on from Persia and Lār, we might profitably consider if Portugal's dealings with smaller, less powerful and less organised polities in the Gulf differed in approach. Most Arabs in the Gulf area lived in tribal units under the rule of shaikhs. The pattern of these tribes was not entirely without structure. Some multi-tribal states were taking shape, but not before the first half of the seventeenth century. The authority of the shaikhs was based on consent in each tribe rather than absolute rule by divine right, the nominees being the most prestigious in ability or wealth in their tribe.¹³² During the period covered by this study, the Arab tribes in the Gulf were not serious players, as they were to become at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the Portuguese had contact with the Arab tribes of the Omani coast during Albuquerque's governorship, in particular when they attacked Muscat in 1507. Further contact came with the conquest of Bahrain, when the Portuguese faced the forces of Al-Juboor.¹³³ Early relations between the Portuguese and the Arab tribes were hostile, and remained so until the fall of Hormuz. Indeed, during the final crisis of Hormuz some Arab tribes in the Gulf, especially on the Persian coast, like the Nakhelu, acted against the Europeans.¹³⁴ The picture was not entirely negative, however.

¹²⁹ *Livro das Monções*, tomo I, pp. 218-19.

¹³⁰ *DUP*, vol. I, f. 197, f. 208.

¹³¹ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, pp. 249-51.

¹³² B. J. Solt, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, pp. 61-2.

¹³³ See Chapter One, section 4.

¹³⁴ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 22.

Portuguese relations with the Arab tribes of Mesopotamia made greater progress than those in the southern and western Gulf.¹³⁵

Actually, dealing with the Arab tribes in southern Iraq was not easy for the Portuguese, but they were at least successful in establishing contact with them.¹³⁶ Sometimes the extent of relations deepened, particularly with tribes in the region of Basra. But they remained unpredictable. According to Portuguese sources, direct Portuguese contact with Basra began after 1510.¹³⁷ Moreover, in 1529, when Nuno da Cunha was in Hormuz, Behchior Tavearez de Sousa arrived there from Basra. This was the first occasion when the Portuguese actively intervened to defend the interests of Shaikh Rashid bin Mugamis, the ruler of Basra.¹³⁸ Against him stood the Arab chieftain who dominated the region of Al-Jezayir in southern Iraq.¹³⁹ He was in dispute with bin Mugamis about the tribute of Basra, and it was for this reason that Shaikh Rashid appealed to Hormuz for assistance.¹⁴⁰ In response, the captain, Cristóvão de Mendonça, sent de Sousa to Basra with a small force. Afterwards Bin Mugamis refused to deliver up seven Turkish vessels (*fustas*) or to prohibit the Turks from trading again in Basra,

¹³⁵ Arab tribes who lived, and still live, in the north-western part of the Gulf and on the western coast of Persia comprised four groups, which played a very important role in events in the Gulf: the Banu Lam of the south-western Iraqi desert; the Muntafiq, a federation of tribes upstream of Basra; the Kaab, downstream from Basra; and the Mushasha, a Shia dynasty which ruled in the area of Huwayza or Arabistan (Khūzistān) on the east coast of the Gulf. For more details about the relations between Mushasha and Safavid Persia see *EI*, New ed., vol. VII, pp. 672-75; Al-Humaidan, *The Social and Political History of the Provinces of Baghdad and Basra*, pp. 10-17, 40-41.

¹³⁶ It is still not easy for those tribes to be ruled by any foreign power and it is difficult to control them.

¹³⁷ BNL - FG, codice no. 7638, fl. 60v. 'Carta el Rey de Baçera a Afonso da Alburquerque'.

¹³⁸ Behchior Tavearez de Sousa was not the first Portuguese to visit Basra, but he was the first one from the Portuguese military to reach it. In fact, the first Portuguese voyage to the city was made by João de Meira when he departed from Hormuz for Basra in June 1517 as captain of the *navio São Jorge* with António Gil as factor in order to secure wheat for Hormuz fortress. By September 1517 de Meira had returned and wheat duly arrived in Hormuz. See R. B. Smith, *João de Meira. Being Portuguese texts ... relative to Joao de Meira's little known voyage to Basra in 1517 and 1521* (Lisbon, 1973), pp. 7-9.

¹³⁹ Al-Jezayir (Gizara in Portuguese) consisted of about two hundred small islands, with their forts and villages, situated in the waters of the Tigris, the Euphrates and in the delta region of the Shatt Al-Arab.

¹⁴⁰ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. IV, liv. iii, pp. 160-61.

which were the conditions of Portugal's assistance. As a punitive measure de Sousa burnt two villages on the coast and returned to Hormuz.¹⁴¹

Other Basran shaikhs asked the Portuguese to assist them against the Turks. Among them, in 1546, was Ali bin Ūlyaan (Ali-Benalion in Portuguese). Following the fall of the city, bin Ūlyaan wrote to Luís Falcão at Hormuz expressing goodwill and encouraging the Portuguese to prevent any further Turkish advance.¹⁴² At the same time he volunteered important information that he had received from the Pasha of Baghdad, including the Turks' project to build a fortress in Basra 'para dali poder conquistar Ormuz e a Índia, pelejando com os desencaminhados Portugueses'. It was also reported that the Turks still called the Portuguese 'astray people', and that they wanted to drive them out of the Muslim regions.¹⁴³ One must assume that Luís Falcão considered this information, but the Portuguese took no serious action until 1550, thus giving the Turks the opportunity to build their fortress, set up their arsenal in Basra, and initiate their first campaign against the Portuguese in the Gulf in 1552, as discussed below in Chapter Four.

The unsuccessful and inept policy that the Portuguese followed toward the peoples and local rulers in the Gulf during the sixteenth century weakened their position in the region and directly led to the loss of some important strategic points, like Bahrain in 1602. The Portuguese were expelled from Bahrain by the Persians, and after this reverse the Gulf seems already to have deteriorated into a permanent state of war.¹⁴⁴ This was the first real military-strategic disaster that befell the Portuguese in the Gulf. It is very revealing that the enemy in question, the force that set in motion the collapse of Portuguese influence, had been one of Portugal's strongest allies in the region for most

¹⁴¹ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 397.

¹⁴² F. de Castro, *Crônica do Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, p. 359.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-61.

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter Four, section 3.

of the sixteenth century – until, that is, the pieces of the Gulf’s diplomatic puzzle began to shift towards its end.

3.4. The Reality of Portuguese Political Power in the Gulf

The Portuguese experience in the Gulf demonstrates emphatically the difference between military victory, which was relatively easy, and a capacity to control the land, its people, and to exercise effective and successful administration. The authority of the Portuguese in the Gulf never extended beyond a few miles of their naval base at Hormuz; it did not extend to mainland Persia or the coast of Arabia, partly out of diplomatic convenience. However, what of the acceptance of Portugal’s presence in the Gulf? To speak of winning ‘hearts and minds’ might stretch the colonial analogy too far and in inappropriate directions, but the question does arise whether the natives of the Gulf accepted Portuguese authority. If acceptance was found in some relationships with the local rulers and merchants, then the rebellions of 1521 and 1529 provide alternative perspectives. We can see signs of the corruption and decline of the Portuguese administration directly after the third treaty was signed between governor Duarte de Meneses and Mohammed Shah II in July 1523. A clause in that treaty decreed that ‘any Portuguese obtaining goods from Moorish vessels for the purpose of avoiding the payment of dues [*cartaz*] should be liable to a penalty’.¹⁴⁵ However, the Portuguese governor was the first person to ignore this clause before the ink on the treaty was dry. He accumulated wealth for himself from traffic passing through the port of Hormuz, before returning to India in April 1524.¹⁴⁶ The manner of de Menses whilst in administration was extremely unsatisfactory to João III, and it was for this reason that the king sent da Gama to succeed him as viceroy.¹⁴⁷ Significantly, with the exception of

¹⁴⁵ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 266.

¹⁴⁶ Corriea, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 815-16.

¹⁴⁷ See Appendix I, no. 2.

Correia, the Portuguese historians are silent about events that occurred during the tenure of de Meneses.

As noted in the previous chapter, from a native standpoint the Portuguese administration in Hormuz was capricious, if not corrupt. This is not a groundless accusation.¹⁴⁸ One may recall, for example, the first resistance in Hormuz to Portuguese rule in 1521, for which the Portuguese blamed the king and vizier. Yet when Reis Sharaf Al-Din returned to the city from Qishm he was reappointed as vizier, having paid 120,000 *ashrafi* to governor de Menezes. The ultimate destination of this payment is not known, but Sharaf Al-Din was nonetheless satisfied that money was the lever to influence the Portuguese. Money could deflect or subvert Portuguese policy.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, nothing in the nature of a financial or administrative system was developed by the Portuguese in the Gulf. Under such circumstances it is little wonder that corruption and profiteering were rife at all levels, from the selling of offices by the viceroys and governors to piracy and private trading in royal ships by captains, and desertion, theft and murder by the soldiery.¹⁵⁰ During the crisis of 1622 the captain of Hormuz used only part of the money in the treasury for the defence of the island, as he desired to keep the remainder for himself, and that was clear when he took with him six heavy boxes containing money and valuable gifts after the city's fall in 1622.¹⁵¹ It seems that there was little sense of loyalty among Portuguese officials, even when facing enemies.

Portugal's administration in the Gulf, in fact, was very makeshift and rudimentary. There was generally no clear distinction between merchants and government officials, since everybody, officials, soldiers, even clergy, was associated

¹⁴⁸ See Chapter Two, section 3.

¹⁴⁹ Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. VI, p. 182; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 203.

¹⁵⁰ *Empire in Transition: The Portuguese World in the time of Camões*, ed. A. Hower and R. A. Preto-Rodas (Florida, 1985), p. 111.

¹⁵¹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 168.

with trade in one way or another. In mitigation, the main reason for speculation amongst Portuguese officials was poor remuneration. As the pay of officials was a matter of indifference, it remained unchanged, in spite of the depreciation of money. In Albuquerque's time the captain of Hormuz received 1,806 *ashrafi* a year and 650 *ashrafi* for his guard. This scale of payment did not change until 1612. Owing to the fall in the value of money, the captain's pay had sunk to 1,204 *ashrafi* a year; but the pay of his guard had risen to 1,625 *ashrafi*, and he was also allowed 2,588 *ashrafi* to pay forty hangers-on supported out of public funds.¹⁵²

However, though the political and military fabric of Portuguese rule decayed during the sixteenth century, the economy of Hormuz still prospered, and this must be seen as a remarkable achievement. Either way, in the apportionment of blame or praise, in the identification of heroes and villains, the men at the centre of the picture were the captains of Hormuz and their subordinates. Although under the administrative system the captain of a fortress was not allowed to hold his office for more than three years, this measure did not prevent corruption. On their first arrival in the Gulf, Portuguese commanders generally depended on their arms and not on their wealth. After Albuquerque's death the balance between the two changed. From the appointment of Lopo Soarez, in 1515, the Portuguese became more dependent on their wealth; and even the king himself became the greatest of all merchants.¹⁵³ In Hormuz this was reflected in the actions of the captains. They were appointed to manipulate the economy to their own advantage, and to the advantage of relatives who were installed in office, and as a consequence they prevented revenues from reaching the royal treasuries of Portugal and Hormuz, with direct political consequences. On several occasions, captains of Hormuz employed their troops in what amounted to robbery.¹⁵⁴ The garrison in the fortress

¹⁵² Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 73.

¹⁵³ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 84.

¹⁵⁴ *APO*, fasc. III, p. 711.

usually numbered 200 men rather than the prescribed 500, it being to the commander's advantage to take the wages of a full complement.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, if we consult Table 3.2 which lists the officers and domestic servants in the fortress of Hormuz after Portugal lost its independence, we can observe that the number of soldiers increased from 339 in 1581 to 451 in 1610, and the total complement there was 580.

Table 3.2. Officers and Dependents of Hormuz Fortress, 1581 and 1610

			1581	1610
Captain of the Fortress	Soldiers		339	451
	Dependents	Men	50	60
		Servants	8	8
Riverside Shipyard (Ribeira)	Officials		3	4
	Dependents	Men	--	--
		Servants	10	11
Officials of the factory	Officials		6	8
	Dependents	Men	10	10
		Servants	10	8
Justice	Officials		2	1
	Dependents	Men	--	--
		Servants	1	1
Customs House (Alfândega)	Officials		8	9
	Dependents	Men	4	--
		Servants	--	--
Church			9	9
Total			460	580

Source: BNL - FG, codice no.11410, fls. 107v-109; Matos, *O Estado da India nos anos de 1581-1588*, pp. 60-67.

Moreover, in spite of the assistance rendered to the Portuguese by Hormuzian officials,¹⁵⁶ they treated them and their kings badly. The use of Luís Falcão as an 'escort' to Mohammad Shah II on the advice of Nuno da Cunha is just one example. He did his job effectively.¹⁵⁷ In 1542 Salgur Shah II was removed to Goa for the nominal

¹⁵⁵ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 202.

¹⁵⁶ For example, in the words of Reis Rukan Al-Din c.1540-1544: 'at the beginning of each year and at my own expense I send people to Cairo, Aden and elsewhere to find out how things are with the Turkish Sultan and his officers. I will quickly tell the garrison commander of all the news I receive'. ANTT, *A G.*, vol. IV, Gav. xv, 11-2, Carta (traslado da) de Rei Roçam Adim, alguazil de Ormuz, para Rei Xarafo, pp. 357-59.

¹⁵⁷ Falcão was appointed as captain of Hormuz during the governorship of João de Castro. Castro, *Crônica do Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, p. 359; Qäemmaqame, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 36.

reason that he was mad. Unconvincing proof was given in support of this diagnosis. In reality, Salgur had tried to acquaint himself with the true state of his finances, for between his own vizier and the captain of Hormuz, little income reached either himself or the king of Portugal.¹⁵⁸ Martim Affonso de Sousa (governor of India 1542-45) appointed Salgur's son Turan as regent in his stead.¹⁵⁹ In Goa, the king complained to the governor of the abuses meted out to him, yet for two years the governor turned a deaf ear to these complaints.¹⁶⁰ Eventually the governor sent his secretary to Hormuz to find out the facts of the case and settle the issue. The secretary produced a report satisfactory to the captain of Hormuz, who bribed not only its author but also the governor in Goa and others in his court. With hindsight, the tenure of de Sousa in India was a nadir in the quality and honesty of Portuguese administration. The government, as Whiteway points out, became little more than an organisation for robbery.¹⁶¹ In February 1543 a fresh treaty was imposed on Salgur Shah II after he returned as king to Hormuz, and the *alfândega* of Hormuz was granted to the king of Portugal.¹⁶² In effect, Salgur lost all authority in his kingdom, and consented to receive a pittance in return. Perhaps his death, in November 1543, was related to his despair at the way that the Portuguese had treated him.¹⁶³

At a more general level it was not possible to control political developments in the Gulf adequately through the royal letters which were sent from Lisbon to the viceroy and governor in Goa; and it was difficult to make realistic decisions in the Spanish-Portuguese council in view of the unclear information available about the political situation there. As Steensgaard notes, several extant documents show that the

¹⁵⁸ Corriea, *Lendas da India*, vol. IV, pp. 271-75; *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 193.

¹⁵⁹ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. V, liv. x, pp. 121, 126-27.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, liv. viii, p. 121; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 467.

¹⁶¹ Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 279.

¹⁶² Couto, *Décadas*, vol. V, liv. x, p. 126.

¹⁶³ According to Teixeira he died by poisoning. *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 193.

council of the Spanish-Portuguese state really thought it was not possible to control political developments in Asia by this distant and indirect means.¹⁶⁴

The tyranny of distance was compounded by other problems of communication arising from the system of winds and currents in the Atlantic and the monsoon system in the Indian Ocean. Letters and dispatches sent to Portugal round the Cape of Good Hope required anything from eighteen months to three years before an answer was received.¹⁶⁵ This meant that many royal orders or viceregal replies were hopelessly out of date when they reached their destinations, having been overtaken by other developments. For this reason, in times of crisis, urgent dispatches could be sent via the Gulf and overland to Aleppo. Somewhat problematically, the overland route passed through Muslim territory for most of the way, whether Persian, Arab, or Turkish.¹⁶⁶

In consequence, many complaints made by Portuguese governors in India and other functionaries in the Indian Ocean regions did not reach Lisbon in time for an adequate response. Even the governors of India who were appointed by the crown could not reach India quickly. For example, viceroy Mathias de Albuquerque left Lisbon in May 1590 and did not arrive at Goa until May 1591.¹⁶⁷ Matters were further exacerbated by factionalism and intrigue at court. Afonso da Albuquerque's last days as governor of India were dogged by a partisan group of nobles in Lisbon.¹⁶⁸ Another victim was Pedro Coutinho, a captain of Hormuz who was both diligent and prudent, and who without doubt would have recovered Bahrain after its occupation by the

¹⁶⁴ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 82.

¹⁶⁵ See Magalhães, *The Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 61-2 for comment on the speed of communications. Fleets left Lisbon in March-April, so as to be able to reach Malabar by November. The return voyage had to leave no later than January. Any delay in Lisbon or slowness in the Atlantic meant that the fleet got to the Indian Ocean late and it was then impossible to cross the Arabian Sea at the right time of year. When this happened, they were forced to winter in Mozambique and wait for good weather to make the crossing to India.

¹⁶⁶ Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. xv.

¹⁶⁸ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-33, Carta de Afonso de Albuquerque a el-rei D. Manuel, pp. 132-33.

Persians in 1602. Nevertheless, he was suddenly dismissed from his command by order of Aires de Saldanha, viceroy of India, without even being given an opportunity to defend himself.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Borges, 'The Portuguese and their Hormuz centred Gulf Policy', p. 210.

Chapter Four: Conflict between Portuguese and Islamic forces in the Gulf during the Sixteenth Century

The second half of the sixteenth century saw significant changes in the balance of power within the Arabian Gulf. The Turkish advance to Baghdad in 1534 and then Basra in 1546, and the Safavid occupations of Lār and Bahrain in 1601-2 had repercussions for the region that go well beyond the scope of this study. Inevitably, however, these developments encroached on Portugal's presence in the Gulf. The dispersion of its interests, with Hormuz island at their heart,¹ helped to stimulate violence and local resistance against its domination. The distances involved made it difficult for the Portuguese to call on reinforcements to suppress trouble spots.

Local resistance to claims of overarching political authority in the Gulf was neither new nor extraordinary. Even before the arrival of the Portuguese, there had been obvious hostility towards Hormuz and its commercial policies, particularly in Bahrain and Oman at the beginning of the sixteenth century. We may recall that Hormuz was consequently in a rather vulnerable condition when Portuguese warships entered the Gulf in 1507.² The resistance that arose in Bahrain against the authority of Hormuz allowed the island to fall into the hands of Al-Juboor. Meanwhile, the Gulf became an increasingly attractive supply route for the expanding Ottoman and Safavid empires.

4.1. Local Resistance in the Gulf against the Portuguese

Having conquered the kingdom of Hormuz between 1507 and 1521, the Portuguese faced the twin problems of security and consolidation. Generally speaking, history judges any colonial power in its motives to control a new territory by the degree of success in its dealings and relations with the people of the territory concerned.

¹ See Introduction, section 4.

² See Chapter One, section 1.

Successful occupation depends largely on the reaction of the people living there against the colonial power. Any colonial power needs to be very aware of existing internal factions which may create difficulties for it. In Hormuz, the Portuguese were not sufficiently aware of these political issues, a deficiency compounded by their lack of understanding of the role of local bodies such as the commercial party and the other merchants in Hormuz.³ The Portuguese failed to consider that, without the profits of the customs house, the council of merchants and the king of Hormuz would not be able to live in peace and security.

In assessing the stance of the Gulf's inhabitants towards the Portuguese, the latter's inability to subject the region must be considered. The foundations of their position were never stable. From the first invasion in 1507, the Portuguese situation in the Gulf was uneasy. Moreover, this situation did not substantially improve, even after the strategic points of Hormuz and Bahrain fell under Portuguese control in 1515 and 1521 respectively. It is true that the Portuguese were successful in entering the Gulf and occupying a few significant ports; but in response, the people of the Gulf were not inactive – they were simply at a military disadvantage. It is important to understand that the Gulf's inhabitants were realistic from the outset in facing the Portuguese. They knew very well that there was no equivalence in military capability between themselves and the Europeans. Regional conflicts must inevitably involve a maritime dimension, and in this respect indigenous technology was simply inadequate to challenge Portuguese shipping, until perhaps the mid-seventeenth century.⁴ Most subjects in the kingdom of Hormuz were Arabs, excepting the rulers and garrison, who were Hormuzian. Lacking leadership, initiative and a tradition of being armed, the people of that area could not take any action against the Portuguese by themselves. Matters were

³ See Chapter Two, section 2.

⁴ G. J. Ames, 'The Straits of Hormuz Fleets: Omani-Portuguese Naval Rivalry and Encounters, 1660-1680', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 83 (1997), pp. 399-400.

further exacerbated by overlapping rivalries. The Omanis, for example, regarded the Hormuzians on the coast of Oman as ‘invaders’, like the Portuguese, rather than native inhabitants. This reflected a more general weakness in Portugal’s presence on the western side of the Gulf, for if the Portuguese seized Hormuz’s commercial strengths in the early sixteenth century then they also inherited the kingdom’s political frailties.⁵

Irrespective of the obstacles to organised and effective resistance in the Gulf, the fact remains that the Portuguese were sitting on top of an active volcano. This volcano erupted only seven years after the occupation of Hormuz in anti-Portuguese revolts led by leaders from the Gulf and Omani coast. The first notable rebellion was in 1519 in Qalhāt in Oman.⁶ More serious still was the revolution of November 1521 led by the king of Hormuz, Turan Shah IV, which engulfed all the territories of the kingdom. In this context, as already implied elsewhere in this thesis, it is very important to reiterate the significance of Hormuz’s customs revenue which served to divide the king and the city’s commercial party from the Portuguese. Responsibility for this revenue had emerged as an issue of great importance.⁷

In 1520 it was left to governor Diogo Lopes de Sequeira (1518-1521) to implement the reorganisation of the customs house. Lopes was hesitant at first, but at the end of the same year (1520) a ship arrived from Lisbon bringing not only reiterated orders but also a whole staff of officials on the scale of the *Casa da Índia*. The governor therefore had no choice but to comply. It is not surprising that the administrative takeover excited strong feeling internally among Hormuzian officials, but the events of 1520 also shook external opinion because of the city’s regional importance.⁸ Matters were exacerbated by the overbearing conduct of the new incumbents, and this seems to

⁵ See Chapter One, section 4.

⁶ S. Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 156.

⁷ See Chapter Two, section 2.

⁸ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vii, pp. 353-54.

have been an important cause of the 1521 revolution. This is suggested in a letter from Turan Shah IV to Manuel I just before the revolt began.

Hormuz today is a vassal of your Majesty, but your officials involved themselves in our internal affairs. Your Majesty should consider this matter, because the state of the kingdom is not so good at this time because of the disorganised and unsettled situation in Persia, which has a bad influence on the trade routes and caffilas. In addition, not as many goods are coming from India. Trade ships now come from only three seaports, whereas they arrived from all the Indian ports in the past. In spite of these problems, simply, your officials come every year and they stay here in Hormuz, and spend lavishly from the treasury of Hormuz. In addition, António de Saldanha⁹ came to me on his way to Basra and he ordered me to prepare for three hundred men for war. I refused because it was not possible to do it, as I have not enough money. He obliged me to pay about 25,000 *ashrafi*.¹⁰ Therefore, this weighty matter needs Your Majesty to take action and solve it before our state becomes worse and worse.¹¹

Several letters like this were sent to the king of Portugal, without receiving any clear response.¹²

Eventually there seemed no hope left for the king of Hormuz save in an armed rising, not only to retake the customs house, but for additional reasons mentioned above.¹³ The situation was not acceptable to the young king; therefore he ignited the revolution because of his desire to shake off Portuguese rule. The revolt had been brewing for a long time, and proposals to attack the Portuguese were openly discussed in the Hormuz bazaar – but the Portuguese, either ignorant or careless, took no precautions.¹⁴ According to Barros, a large proportion of the Portuguese soldiers

⁹ Sequeira dispatched Saldanha from Goa early in 1519 with a fleet to cruise along the coast of Arabia, and from there to winter in Hormuz. Since the summer season in the Arabian Sea is between May and August, it was undoubtedly then that Saldanha departed for Basra from Hormuz. See R. Smith, *João de Meira. Being Portuguese Texts*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰ See also Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vii, pp. 352-53.

¹¹ Translated by the author. ANTT, *Documentos Orientais, Cartas missives de e para o Rei* maço I, microfilm, no. 457.

¹² Complaints to the king of Portugal about the offences of governors during their visits to Hormuz were made by locals and also by Portuguese captains in the city. In 1529, for example, Cristóvão de Mendonça observed: 'I have already told Your Excellency of the harm that is done by governors coming here. I would remind Your Excellency once more that there is nothing so damaging to your interests as this, for their coming here means emptying Hormuz of all its inhabitants, because these people take over the houses'. See the full text of this letter in Appendix II, Doc. 1.

¹³ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vii, p. 351

¹⁴ Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 200-1.

continued to sleep in the city; the artillery was not mounted on the walls of the fort; and one of the cisterns was filled with wood rather than water.¹⁵

The scheme of the revolution was an elaborate one, conceived and carried out by Turan Shah and his vizier Sharaf Al-Din. Letters were dispatched to the Hormuzian governors along the Omani coast and in Bahrain. The plan was that all of the governors should rise against the Portuguese in their cities on the appointed day, 30 November 1521.¹⁶ On the night of 30 November a series of concerted attacks began at midnight against the Portuguese in Hormuz, Muscat, Qalhât, Suhar along the Arabian coast and in the Bahrain islands.¹⁷ These attacks were made by sea, which is important evidence that the inhabitants of the Gulf tried to use their local ships against the Portuguese for the first time since their arrival. The plan was faithfully executed by the governors. In Bahrain, all posts were attacked and destroyed. The Portuguese garrisons were so completely taken by surprise, that out of 400 Portuguese in Hormuz about 120 were killed.¹⁸ In Hormuz the Portuguese survivors escaped to the fort where munitions were scarce, and where the cannon, even if on the walls, could not be used in case the nearby water tanks burst.¹⁹ Reinforcements arrived from Muscat in time to save the besieged Portuguese fortress.²⁰ Only in Muscat did the Portuguese find friends and protection; for according to Adamiyat, in scheming to cast off his allegiance to the king of Hormuz, the Arab chief, Shaik Rashid Al-Muscati, failed to obey the king's orders.²¹ Al-Muscati attacked and defeated the Hormuzian troops, whose commander, Reis Dalawar Shah Al-

¹⁵ Barros, *Ásia*, vol.III, Liv. vii, pp. 356-57.

¹⁶ M. Salman, 'The Revolution in the Arabian Gulf against the Portuguese in 1521', *Bahrain Cultural Journal*, 20 (1998), p. 52.

¹⁷ Barros, *Ásia*, vol.III, Liv. vii, p. 358.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.

¹⁹ Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 201.

²⁰ Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 160.

²¹ F. Adamiyat, *Bahrain Islands*, p. 22.

Fāli,²² was killed in the fighting. According to Portuguese sources the mind behind the insurrection on the Omani coast was Reis Dalawar, a brother of the Hormuzian vizier. He had been appointed vizier of Qalhāt to lead operations on the Omani coast before the revolt began.²³

Having failed in his attempt to oust the Portuguese, on 19 January 1522 Turan Shah fled with his followers to the island of Qishm to found a new settlement, a course which showed their despair and bitter hatred of the Portuguese.²⁴ Turan Shah was subsequently poisoned by his own followers.²⁵ It is still a matter of argument who killed him. Some historians suggest that Sharaf Al-Din assassinated the king and appointed another young prince, Mohammed Shah, as his successor.²⁶ However, Qāemmaqāmi questions why Sharaf Al-Din should have done this: he was Turan Shah's closest friend and his vizier in their long struggle against the Portuguese. Qāemmaqāmi adds that this event is still obscure and we lack the sources to prove any claim.²⁷ The Portuguese historian de Sousa offers another point of view which may clarify the matter. He attributes the murder of Turan Shah to a chieftain of the Al-Juboor tribe, Shaik Husain bin Saeed, who ruled a sizeable part of Oman at that time.²⁸ Perhaps he hired one of the Arabs of Qishm to poison the king? Wilson is of this view; he writes that Turan Shah was killed in Qishm by his own people.²⁹ It seems for this reason in 1522 the

²² *Delamixar* in Portuguese. See Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vii, p. 354.

²³ Barros, *Ásia*, vol. III, Liv. vii, pp. 370-71.

²⁴ Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 200-1.

²⁵ M. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, pp. 263-66.

²⁶ G. Correia, vol. II, p. 744; Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 200; E. Abbas, *Mutalate Der Bab Bahrain Wa Jazair Khaleej Fārs*, p. 65.

²⁷ Qāemmaqāmi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal*, p. 28.

²⁸ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 266. Shaik Husain, who had with him 500 horsemen and 4,000 infantry, obtained some aid from Luiz de Menezes in Oman. He captured Suhar and ousted the Hormuzians. See Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, pp. 162-63.

²⁹ A. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 123.

Portuguese appointed Shaik Husain as governor of Suhar on their behalf without consulting the king of Hormuz.³⁰

This important event shows the chronic struggle between the Arabs and the Persians, which Nuno da Cunha tried to use when he installed Rashid Al-Muscati in the ministry of Hormuz, as discussed in the previous chapter.³¹ This kind of strife affected the kingdom of Hormuz throughout its history.

However, to better understand this matter, we should analyse the motives of Al-Juboor for murdering Turan Shah. We could perhaps argue that the Arabs decided to take revenge on the Persians of Hormuz, who had encouraged and helped the Portuguese to invade Bahrain in the same year. Did the Al-Juboor seek revenge on all those who had the blood of Muqrin Al-Jaubre on their hands, especially the leaders of Hormuz? If so, it is possible that Shaik Husain sent one of his followers to Qishm to serve with Turan Shah's men until he got a chance to kill him. This explanation, in fact, is the one upheld by several Iranian writers, like Eqbal, Admyait and Farugy. They condemn the Al-Juboor for their role in the revolt, and argue that this was the main reason why it failed. Moreover, they brand the Arab tribes of Oman as 'traitors'. Certainly from a local perspective the behaviour of Rashid Al-Muscati in 1521 was regrettable, but these writers disregard the attitude of Shah Ismail towards the Portuguese invasion of Hormuz and his alliance with them, and also the silence of the kings of Lār and Fārs, at least during the initial Portuguese incursions. Moreover, the Iranian scholars do not mention in their works the sacrifices made by the Arab tribes, including the Al-Juboor, through their resistance to the Portuguese after 1507. Albuquerque noted in his *Commentaries* that they sent about 10,000 mounted troops to help Muscat against the invaders.³²

³⁰ Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 163.

³¹ See Chapter Three, section 1.

³² *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, vol, I, pp. 74-5.

This is not a trial with the aim of defending the Arab tribes on the west coast of the Gulf against the Persians in Hormuz or on the mainland. Yet an attempt must be made to establish a more balanced view of these events. Both peoples in the Gulf, Arabs and Persians alike, made mistakes when the Portuguese arrived which affected any plans to undermine their influence while it was still being built up in the early sixteenth century. Both suffered from an outlook that stressed divisions rather than common ground.

After the failed revolution of 1521 and the death of Turan Shah, it seems that the return of Sharaf Al-Din to Hormuz and its puppet king was arranged in secret between himself and the Portuguese. Knowing nothing of this secret diplomacy, the captain of Hormuz imprisoned him on his return.³³ In February 1523 Sharaf Al-Din was released by Duarte de Meneses.³⁴ In the following July a fresh treaty was made with the new king of Hormuz, Mohammed Shah II, stipulating that the kingdom's annual tribute should be raised to 60,000 *ashrafi* a year, an increase of 150 per cent.³⁵ The treaty also stated that the Portuguese should not interfere in the affairs of the government of Hormuz.³⁶ It contained a number of other regulations through which the Portuguese sought to consolidate their own position at Hormuz and also to control, to their own advantage, the flow of traffic to and from the city. There was also a clause limiting the use and practice of arms amongst the Muslims of Hormuz.³⁷

With or without the treaty, the Portuguese did not find it difficult to maintain control over Hormuz itself after 1521.³⁸ Anti-Portuguese activities in the Gulf at large continued, however. In 1526 resistance arose in Qalhāt and Muscat, triggered by the

³³ Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, p. 202.

³⁴ See p. 168.

³⁵ See Chapter Three, section 3, p. 153.

³⁶ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, p. 266.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ For the policies of Manuel and João III, and the latter's reaction to the events of 1521, see J. Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz Au Début du XVI^e Siècle', p. 138.

actions of Diogo de Mello (1524-1528), the fourth captain of Hormuz and brother of the governor of India, Lopo Vaz de Sampaio.³⁹ Once again, as in 1521, Qalhāt was the main focus of the revolt by virtue of its economic importance.⁴⁰ On this occasion the neglect of the Portuguese administration is clear. Though news of the rebellion reached Goa in February 1526, Sampaio did not set out with a relief force until May. Having first anchored at Qalhāt, he pacified the revolt leaders there by promising to redress their grievances and punish de Mello, thus restoring confidence without recourse to coercion.⁴¹ In Muscat, there had long been strife between the Arab tribes of Oman and the kingdom of Hormuz. Sampaio therefore strove by similar means to assuage Shaikh Rashid Al-Muscati, and succeeded. Rashid was still ruler of Muscat in 1529 when Nuno da Cunha took over as viceroy; Sampaio would surely not have tolerated an openly hostile leader.⁴² This sequence of events demonstrates that Portuguese rule could be successful, and even sensitive, but it depended on the personalities of their governors and captains, whether in India or the Gulf.

Another rebellion erupted in 1529, this time in Bahrain. Both the rebellion and the Portuguese campaign against Bahrain are discussed in a letter of November 1529 written by Cristóvão de Mendonça, the fifth captain of Hormuz.⁴³ This uprising had one unexpected result – the exile to Portugal of Sharaf Al-Din, who had showed himself hostile to Portuguese interests in the Gulf. Among the most powerful relations of Al-Din was his nephew, Reis Badr Al-Din,⁴⁴ the governor of Bahrain, who resisted all

³⁹ *DUP*, vol. I, f. 471.

⁴⁰ See Chapter One, section 1.

⁴¹ Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 163. Despite the promises of de Sampaio, the captain of Hormuz, Diogo de Mello, remained there until 1528. See Appendix II, Doc. 1.

⁴² See Chapter Three, section 1.

⁴³ ANTT, *A G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, Carta de Cristóvão de Mendonça a el-rei D. João III, na qual se conta os acontecimentos e inimizades da Índia e o Estado da fortaleza, pp. 254-48. See Appendix II, Doc. 1.

⁴⁴ See also ANTT, *A G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 254 where he is called Rex Badradim who was *parente de Rex Saraffo*.

attempts to exact a higher tribute from him by the Portuguese. The Bahrainis avenged themselves by massacring the Portuguese garrison to the last man and by hanging the captain of the fortress from a palm tree.⁴⁵

Given that Badr Al-Din had done serious damage (*muito agravos*) in Bahrain, viceroy da Cunha despatched a punitive force under his brother Simão to suppress the revolt and restore order.⁴⁶ Simão da Cunha soon displayed his military inexperience. On 20 September he arrived off Bahrain and wasted a great deal of gunpowder in saluting the port.⁴⁷ More importantly he found that the fortress was formidable, not the weak establishment that had been described to him.⁴⁸ This is one of many instances where Portuguese intelligence was either out of date or simply inaccurate. With about 800 troops at his disposal, Badr Al-Din refused to surrender.⁴⁹ An attempted Portuguese landing was compromised by the 'sickly season'.⁵⁰ This happened more than once to the Portuguese in the Gulf, because they did not properly understand the local weather and wind systems.⁵¹ In addition, local resistance on the island was fierce, causing the already depleted Portuguese supplies of gunpowder to run out. Da Cunha sent for more from Hormuz, but by the time it arrived his men were ailing; no one was strong enough to carry the artillery from or to the ships. In a pathetic tableau, ropes were tied to the feet of the sick, and they were dragged to the boats.⁵² Thus, the Portuguese campaign

⁴⁵ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. IV, Liv. vi, pp. 19-22, 25-27; A. Farouhy, *The Bahrain Islands*, p. 62.

⁴⁶ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 254. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 397.

⁴⁷ The appointment of relatives to military or naval commands was an important feature of Portuguese administration. Da Cunha lost one brother, Pero Vaz da Cunha, during the fighting and epidemic in Mombassa. His second brother, Simão, fell at Bahrain in 1529. See ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 255; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, pp. 397-98.

⁴⁸ ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 255.

⁴⁹ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. IV, Liv. vi, pp. 24-25; ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 255.

⁵⁰ See Introduction, section 4.

⁵¹ The climate was the main enemy of all the invaders who mounted campaigns against Bahrain. In 1559 the Turks from Al-Hasa launched an expedition and suffered in much the same way.

⁵² Barros, *Ásia*, vol. IV, Liv. iii, pp. 174-77; Couto, *Décadas*, vol. IV, Liv. iv, pp. 23-30; F. Castanheda, *História do Descobrimentos*, vol. VII, pp. 180-86; Correia, *Lendas da Índia*, vol. III, pp. 325-29.

against Bahrain was a disaster. Two hundred men died, including Simão da Cunha, and about the same number succumbed to disease. In the end only a small remnant of the Portuguese force returned to Hormuz to tell the story of the assault.⁵³ It was the first time since the arrival of the Portuguese in the Gulf that such an important commander had been lost, an event the more shocking because it occurred during such an inconsequential action. This shows the limitations of Portuguese military strength, and the weaknesses of their strategy.

4.2. Portuguese-Ottoman Confrontation in the Gulf

After 1529 the Gulf was generally quiet, except for some minor problems in Hormuz. Nevertheless, as the century wore on the Portuguese came to face threats of a very different order, initially from the Ottoman Turks whose relentless campaigns brought them to the northern and western regions of the Gulf. Relations between the two powers might have been very different if João III had replied favourably to a letter sent by Süleyman II in 1544. The Ottoman sultan sought agreement on the flow of commerce in the Indian Ocean and the possibility of peaceful commercial exchange with the Portuguese.⁵⁴ Instead, the Portuguese-Ottoman confrontation flared up intermittently for most of the sixteenth century and was centred on three regions: the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf. This chapter will deal with the conflict in the Gulf only.

After the battle of Diu in 1509 the Portuguese were well aware that any Islamic power that controlled the Red Sea would pose a real threat to their Indian Ocean and Gulf trade routes. Therefore on several occasions they tried, and failed, to control access to the Red Sea.⁵⁵ The Portuguese were also aware that under the right circumstances the

⁵³ ANTT, *A G.*, vol. X, Gav. xx, 2-27, p. 255.

⁵⁴ S. Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion* (Istanbul, 1994), p. 67.

⁵⁵ Albuquerque failed to capture Aden and the Straits of Bab Al-Mandeb in 1513. Successive Portuguese efforts in the Red Sea and Aden in 1517, 1520, 1525 and 1529 all met with failure. See Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*; Danvers; *The Portuguese in India*; *The Commentaries of the Great*

Ottoman Empire might concentrate its efforts away from Europe towards Asia, and especially India.⁵⁶ This view was well-founded. After they invaded Egypt and Hejaz in 1517 and controlled part of the Red Sea coast, the Ottomans had spasmodically attempted to destroy the growing power and commerce of Portugal in the East. They do not appear to have extended their anti-Portuguese operations to the Gulf until 1546, even though victories over the Safavids and Mamluks had brought the Ottomans to the Red Sea and Gulf much earlier, during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. After the Ottoman occupation of Baghdad in 1534, the need became apparent for resuscitating the trade routes of these newly acquired territories.⁵⁷ Inevitably, however, the international trade routes of southern Iraq intersected with those of the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and therefore with Portuguese controlled space.

Therefore, in the long-term, it seems that Turkish policy was directed towards the expulsion of the Portuguese, not only from the Gulf but from the Indian Ocean as well.⁵⁸ The capture of Basra in 1546 – possibly triggered by Turkish concerns about relations between Al-Ūlyaan and the Portuguese in Hormuz – provided an opportunity to set this campaign in motion.⁵⁹ Basra became the centre of Ottoman naval activity in the Gulf with a shipyard and a fleet of fifteen vessels intended for operations against the Portuguese.⁶⁰ For practical purposes, Basra proved hardly more useful as an advance

Afonso Dalboquerque; S. M. Salim, *Al Ehtelal Al-Awwal le Alyamen*; Q. Al-Nahrawli, *Al-Barq Al-Yamani fi Al-Fatah Al-Osmani* (Riyadh, 1967).

⁵⁶ G. W. F. Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs 1511-1574*, p. 93.

⁵⁷ *Al-Dulah Al-Authmaneah Tarkekh wa Hadarah*, ed. Akmal Al-Aldin Ehsan Öqli (Istanbul, 1999), pp. 40-43; *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age*, ed. M. Kunt and C. Woodhead (London, 1995), pp. 60-1.

⁵⁸ M. Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, (London, 1831), pp. 26-7.

⁵⁹ N. Z. Murtada, *Klshen Khlfya*, trans. M. K. Nuras (Al-Najef Al-Ashraf, 1971), pp. 201-02.

⁶⁰ The Sultan received the submission of Ali bin Ūlyaan, the leader of the Al-Jazair Arabs. He remained on good terms with the Ottomans for a while, but later joined Shaikh Rashid bin Magamis in his rebellion against them. He also dealt with the Portuguese in Hormuz in the 1550s. There are two undated letters from Ali bin Ūlyaan and Shaikh Yahya to Luís Falcão, the Portuguese captain of Hormuz. For more details see F. Castro, *Crônica Vice-rei D. João de Castro*, pp. 359-65; Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VI, Liv. ix, pp. 244-45.

base than Suez.⁶¹ Despite its deficiencies, Basra came to occupy an important position in Ottoman strategy. Yet the city's potential was inextricably bound up with the Portuguese: while Hormuz was in hostile hands, Basra could not fulfil its promise as a commercial centre, and neither could the Turks use the port as a base for expeditions into the Indian Ocean.⁶² The Gulf therefore became a contested space between the two powers.

Within a few years of occupying Basra, and still incapable of engaging in naval warfare against the Portuguese in the Gulf, in 1550 the Turkish army entered Qatîf⁶³ and two years later conquered Al-Hasa province from the mainland, not from the sea.⁶⁴ Taken together, these conquests were intended to allow Turkish forces to strike at Portuguese strategic points in the Gulf, and in particular Hormuz.⁶⁵ From a Portuguese perspective, these advances were a source of great concern. Both the security and trade networks of Hormuz were endangered by the expansion of Turkish authority.⁶⁶ Basra and Al-Hasa were the keys to controlling overland trade to and from Aleppo. The flow of East Asian spices continued through the Gulf, but any trade from Basra to Aleppo

⁶¹ Potache, 'The commercial relations between Basrah and Goa in the sixteenth century', p. 157; Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs 1511-1574*, p. 93.

⁶² C. H. Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 6 (1980), p. 273.

⁶³ In 1550 the Arabs of Qatîf, under pressure from the Turks, delivered up the fort of the city, an act which dismayed the king of Hormuz. The viceroy of India, Afonso de Noronha, therefore sent his nephew Antão de Noronha with 19 vessels and 1,200 men to recapture the fort. On reaching Hormuz, he marched with 3,000 men provided by Turan Shah IV. A force of 400 Turks was garrisoned inside the fortress, who defended themselves bravely, but after eight days evacuated the place in the dead of night leaving the fort to the Portuguese. Noronha, fearing that the Turks might recapture it, and not daring to maintain it, razed the fortress by blowing it up. However, the task was executed in such a careless manner that forty Portuguese were buried in the debris. Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VI, Liv. ix, p. 246; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p. 152.

⁶⁴ There is no evidence available before the second half of the sixteenth century that the Hormuzian ruler of Bahrain and shaiks of Qatîf and Al-Hasa paid homage or conveyed their submission to Sultan Süleyman after he conquered Baghdad in 1534, as some writers have claimed in their studies. See A. Al-Azzawi, *Tareakh Al-Iraq bayn Ihtilalayn*, (Baghdad, 1949), vol. IV, p. 44; S. Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, p. 136.

⁶⁵ Özbaran, 'The Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf, 1534-1581', *JAH*, no. 6, 1 (1972), pp. 60-61.

⁶⁶ In a letter of 1547 from Manuel de Lima, the captain of Hormuz, appraised the viceroy of India of the proximity of the Turks. He pointed out the dangers of the fall of Bahrain in the hands of the Turks, and some of its attractions. S. Özbaran, 'Bahrain in the sixteenth century', *Al-Watheekah*, 15 (1989), p. 228.

and the Mediterranean passed through zones of Turkish control.⁶⁷ Turkish objectives were to build up Basra's prosperity and to control both shores of the Gulf; goals which quickly became apparent to the Portuguese, and which inevitably led to frequent clashes between the rivals.⁶⁸ There is some evidence that the Portuguese tried to avoid hostilities by entering into negotiations with the Turks, offering a treaty whereby they would obtain wheat in exchange for pepper. Nothing is known of the diplomacy, but it seems that the Turks rejected this proposal.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the Turks in Basra subdued the local Arab tribes, and gave new confidence to those merchants who operated out of or via the city.⁷⁰ After 1546 there was an increased turnover in trade, even before the Fertile Crescent was fully united under Ottoman rule.⁷¹ The Turks knew very well that a revival of trade with India was important for Basra, and for the caravans travelling between it and the Mediterranean coast. They also needed a revival of trade to help finance the costly occupation of the northern Gulf.⁷²

In 1550 the Portuguese tried to drive the Turks out of the Gulf in a campaign mounted by Antão de Noronha, the commander of the Hormuz fleet. They had already established good relations with the Arab tribes in some parts of Basra and now urged them to act against the Turks.⁷³ Evidence suggests that the Portuguese already had some knowledge of the tensions between the Arab tribes and the Turkish occupiers. Indeed, the immediate cause of the first Ottoman expedition against the Portuguese had been

⁶⁷ M. Meilink-Roelofez, *Asian Trade and European influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, p. 133.

⁶⁸ ANTT, CC, Part I, maço 87, doc. 71; M. Pearson, 'The Estado da India and the Hajj', pp. 105-15;

⁶⁹ Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs 1511-1574*, p. 93.

⁷⁰ ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, 27 September, 1547, fl. 123. Letter of D. Manuel de Lima to D. João de Castro. He mentions that no merchants from Aleppo or Baghdad arrived in Basra after the Ottomans captured it, and few 'traradas' came from Basra to Hormuz.

⁷¹ *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age*, p. 63.

⁷² ANTT, *Cart. Ormuz*, 23 June 1547, fl. 88. Letter of D. Manuel de Lima to D. João de Castro. This letter says much about how the Portuguese perceived Ottoman political and economic strategy in the Gulf, including their aim of enriching Basra.

⁷³ See footnote 60 above.

their assistance to rebellious Arab elements the previous year.⁷⁴ Therefore, the first real hostilities between the two powers in the region began in 1552, when the Sultan sent Piri Reis, the *Kapudan* of Egypt, against the Portuguese with a fleet of thirty vessels and 1,600 troops.⁷⁵ Piri Reis departed from Suez with orders to go to Basra and thence, in conjunction with the force awaiting him there, to sail to Hormuz and reduce it to submission. After that, if everything went according to plan, he should proceed and take Bahrain.⁷⁶ The expedition reached Muscat in July 1552, and Piri laid siege to the Portuguese fortress there for a month.⁷⁷ Notwithstanding the fortifications, the Turkish forces were landed without resistance. We must assume that the Portuguese defences were unfinished since João de Lisboa had been sent out to fortify Muscat only three months beforehand.⁷⁸ This fact, along with the size of the Portuguese garrison, places some doubt on the splendid victory which Piri Reis claimed to have won. After the Turks had sacked the town, de Lisboa eventually surrendered, having been assured that his life would be spared.⁷⁹

These events at Muscat were significant for the overall success of the Turkish expedition. The delay caused by the protracted operations there afforded an opportunity for Alvaro de Noronha, the captain of Hormuz, to prepare his fortress for a long siege, which began in August 1552.⁸⁰ It also gave an opportunity for the merchants in the city

⁷⁴ Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 168.

⁷⁵ Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 71; A. Aba Hussain, 'The Ottoman Documents in the Bahrain Archives', *Al-Watheekah*, 31 (1996), p. 182. For differing estimates of the force see ANTT, CC, parte, I, maço 89, doc. 9, fl. 3v; Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, pp. 85-86.

⁷⁶ ANTT, CC, part I a, maço 89, Doc. 9, f. 5r.

⁷⁷ In his 'Mirat Al-Memalik' ('The Mirror of Countries') Seydî Ali Reis gives the date of this campaign as 961A.H. (1553). See *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, p. xiv; F. Danvers, *Report on the Indian Office Records Related to Persia and the Persian Gulf* (London, n.d.), p. 9.

⁷⁸ Not the famous Portuguese fortresses, Al-Jalali and Al-Merani. They were built later in 1587 and 1588.

⁷⁹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p. 163; ANTT, CC, Parte, I, maço 89, doc. f. 9, 3v.

⁸⁰ Alvaro de Noronha had at that time about 700 troops. ANTT, CC, Parte, I, maço 89, doc. f. 9, 3v-5r. Sousa suggested that there were 900 soldiers in the fortress. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p.

to evacuate their families and property to the island of Qishm. Piri bombarded the fortress of Hormuz without intermission for about a month;⁸¹ however, in the face of heavy losses and with the realisation that they could not prevail, the Turks abandoned their siege in September and looted the city.⁸² Piri Reis then went to Qishm. In so doing he revealed his personal priorities during the campaign: he knew very well that the merchants of Hormuz had taken refuge on the island.⁸³ Having secured some profit from the affair, Piri tried to retire to Basra.⁸⁴ The Portuguese response, incidentally, had been to fit out a fleet from Goa which sailed in September 1552 but turned back at Diu once the danger had passed.⁸⁵

Overall, these events show the lack of military experience of Piri Reis. The admiral had his own parallel agenda during the expedition. It seems that he was more interested in tapping the wealth of cities such as Muscat, Hormuz and Qishm than ‘liberating’ them and their people from Portuguese rule. This is why Piri, when he heard that the Portuguese fleet was advancing towards him,⁸⁶ escaped through the Strait of Hormuz with his spoils. In the event he was unable to clear the whole of his fleet, and so departed with only three galleys.⁸⁷ One of his ships was lost near Bahrain, and with the remaining two he was lucky to escape from his pursuers and return to Egypt.⁸⁸ In

164. A Portuguese eyewitness to this event stated that the siege started on 31 August 1552. The man in question was the priest of the church of Hormuz, Gonçalo Roiz, who sent a *carta* to the priests and the brothers in Coimbra in Portugal. *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente Índia*, vol. V, pp. 190-95.

⁸¹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p. 164.

⁸² Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 169.

⁸³ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VI, Liv. x, p. 426.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; *GEP*, vol. 19, p. 640.

⁸⁵ Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 126.

⁸⁶ Or alternatively, as Özbaran points out, being informed that the report sent by the *beglerbeg* of Basra, was unfavourable to him. Özbaran, ‘The Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf, 1534-1581’, p. 50.

⁸⁷ *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, p. 4; Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VI, Liv. x, pp. 468-69.

⁸⁸ Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 94; *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, p. 4.

1553 Süleyman ordered Piri Reis's execution because, by disobeying orders, he had compromised the expensive campaign, lowered Ottoman naval prestige, and left the Portuguese with an undeserved reputation for invincibility.⁸⁹

We have focused particularly on this first Turkish attempt to gain control of the Gulf because it was the most important. Afterwards there were no further centrally-organised expeditions against the Portuguese. Even the campaign against Bahrain in 1559 was not by the sultan's order.

Following the setbacks of 1552, Süleyman's attention turned to the Ottoman vessels that were still at Basra. The sultan lost no time in appointing a new *Kapudan* to shepherd the remains of the Gulf fleet to Suez – Murad Reis, who was the *sanjak beg* of Qatîf,⁹⁰ had been responsible for the loss of Qatîf in 1550, and was very anxious to recover his reputation. Thus, in July 1553, he was ordered to retrieve the remnants of Piri Reis's expedition. He sailed from Basra with sixteen galleys and *kalyote*, but failed to break through the Strait of Hormuz.⁹¹ The depth of the sultan's concern for his fleet is shown by his next step,⁹² namely his appointment of a professional Turkish *Kapudan*, Seydî Ali Reis (Ali Chelabi), to complete the task.⁹³ Ali proceeded to Qatîf but could not gather any intelligence about the Portuguese. He then crossed to Bahrain where Reis

⁸⁹ Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 71; *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, p. xiv. There is another interesting story about this event, which says that Piri Reis refused to give the *beglerbeg* of Basra, Qubād Pasha, some of his spoils and that he escaped from him to Egypt. Therefore the *beglerbeg* of Basra immediately informed Süleyman that Piri was a rogue. See A. Al-Azzawi, *Tarekh Al-Iraq bayna Ihtilalayn*, vol. IV, p. 70.

⁹⁰ Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p.72.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, pp. 168-69; *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, p. 4.

⁹² His worries were justified. At the same time that Murad Reis was sailing from Basra, Diego de Noronha, the commander of the Hormuz fleet, sent some vessels with a number of troops to the mouth of Shat Al-Arab to seek information about the Turks' whereabouts. See Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VI, Liv. x, p. 487.

⁹³ He was also known by the name 'Kiatibi Rum', meaning Turkish writer. He was author of *Mohit* ('The Ocean'). In fact, his work 'Mirat Al-Memalik' compares with the great works of other Muslim travellers like Ibn Batuta. He boasted that he never ceased to hope to see Gujarat and Hormuz joined to the Ottoman realm. His one desire was to see Sultan of the Ottomans as ruler of the world. See *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, p. iii; Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 73.

Jalal Al-Din Murad Mahmood, the Hormuzian ruler was not forthcoming with ‘information about the fleet of Infidels’.⁹⁴ When Reis prepared to leave Bahrain in August 1554 the Portuguese attacked him near Khúr Fakhān. A second attack was launched by other Portuguese vessels near Suhar on the Omani coast.⁹⁵ Fernando de Noronha, who had returned from the Red Sea after a fruitless endeavour to capture Dofar, went out to meet Ali, and made contact with him near Muscat on 25 August. Stories about their encounter are confusing. The Portuguese historian Sousa stated that ‘the enemy, not daring to risk a battle, endeavoured to escape with his whole fleet, but six of his vessels could not escape, being taken by our caravels’.⁹⁶ Conversely, the Turkish historian Hajji Khalifah suggested that ‘This battle was even greater than that between Khair Al-Din Barbarossa and Andrea Doria in the Mediterranean Sea’.⁹⁷ However, the main concern here is not to give details of the battle but merely to register that the Turks suffered heavy losses.⁹⁸ In addition to their losses in combat, the Turks also had the misfortune to suffer from a severe storm which ran several of their vessels aground, frustrating Ali’s plans, and barely allowing him to escape to the coast of Gujarat with only five vessels.⁹⁹ Leaving his ships in charge of the local ruler, he travelled overland for four years, across India and Persia, and he at last reached Istanbul via Baghdad in May 1557.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, pp. 9-10.

⁹⁵ Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 73. For more details about this battle see: *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, pp. 11-16; Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, pp. 73-5.

⁹⁶ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p. 173.

⁹⁷ Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 75.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p. 173; *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, pp. 17-36. Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁰ *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, pp. xv-xvi. Hajji Khalifah, *The History of the Maritime Wars of the Turks*, p. 77.

The naval operations against the Portuguese in 1552-4 were extremely wasteful of men and resources. Between them, the initial expedition and the attempts to salvage the situation cost the Turks the whole of their Gulf fleet.

In the wake of these early Portuguese-Ottoman clashes, the situation in the Gulf was turbulent. Both powers constantly watched each other's activities through their spies in Hormuz, Bahrain and Basra.¹⁰¹ In 1556 the Portuguese tried to take advantage of an Arab revolt against the Turks at Basra. An Arab call for Portuguese assistance conveyed by Antão de Noronha from Hormuz to Goa brought the mobilization of a fleet under Álvaro da Silveira, the *captião-mór*. In the end, however, Silveira claimed that a storm so disabled his forces at Basra that he was not in any condition to provide support to the Arab chieftains there.¹⁰²

It was not until 1559 that the Ottomans made the occupation of Bahrain a serious independent objective within their Gulf strategy. This coincided with efforts from within Bahrain to detach itself from outside influence.

After the arrival of the Turks, Bahrain stood between the two powers.¹⁰³ This provided an opportunity for its governor, Jalal Al-Din Murad Mahmood Shah,¹⁰⁴ to play one off against the other and thereby assert his own autonomy. Bahrain was still nominally under Hormuz's authority, of which the annual customs tributes were an integral part, but Portuguese control over the islands and their commerce was never absolute. Bahrain's location offered a unique opportunity to detach itself from

¹⁰¹ ANTT, *A G.*, vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, Carta de Simão da Costa, pp. 137-38.

¹⁰² Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VII, Liv. iii, p. 206; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, p. 507.

¹⁰³ See above, pp. 13, 62, 67, 114.

¹⁰⁴ From early 1529 up to 1605 a single family known as 'Branghaar' held the governorship of Bahrain. They were a well known Kurdish family of Sunni faith who changed to Shia a few years after their rise. They were from the village of Herg, located in the Fāl district of southern Persia. The first governor of this family was Reis Amin Jalal Al- Din Murad Mahmood Shah Branghar, and he ruled Bahrain from 1529 to his death in 1577. He was succeeded by his son Reis Kamal Al- Din Mahmood to 1602, when he too was killed. Finally, the brother of the second governor, Reis Amir Yousif Shah, ruled Bahrain from 1602 to 1605 when he died in the conflict against the Portuguese and Hormuzian attackers. The family continued to live in Bahrain even after they lost their governorship until 1629. See A. Bushiri, 'The war of no battle - Bahrain in 1559', *Dilmun. Journal of the Bahrain Historical and Archaeological Society*, 18 (1999-2000), pp. 20-1.

Portuguese Hormuz and Turkish Al-Hasa without arousing the hostility of either. This was precisely the intention of the Branghar Fāli family. First of all, they changed their doctrine from Sunni to Shia, because most Bahrainis were Shiites. This reinforced their standing with the inhabitants of Bahrain. At the same time they had cordial relations with the royal family of Hormuz because they were related to the vizier.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, because Bahrain was close to Al-Hasa and its overland routes,¹⁰⁶ good relations between the two were an economic necessity. The Branghar governor exploited the fact that many of the wealthier merchants in Al-Hasa were from Bahrain.¹⁰⁷ Some important prerequisites for Bahrain's independence – peaceful relations with its stronger neighbours – were therefore in place.

It is not necessary here to relate the Turkish campaign in full. Diogo de Couto, who recounts in detail the Portuguese side of the affair, states that Mustafa Pasha, *beglerbeg* of Al-Hasa, prepared his expedition against Bahrain with the co-operation of the *beglerbeg* of Basra.¹⁰⁸ In July the Turks began to besiege the fortress at Manama.¹⁰⁹ Jalal Al-Din, commanding the garrison in person,¹¹⁰ managed to advise both the king and captain of Hormuz of the situation.¹¹¹ The response to the news in Hormuz was fairly typical; a Portuguese fleet consisting of twenty-two *grabs*¹¹² was sent to save the

¹⁰⁵ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VII, Liv. vii, p. 111.

¹⁰⁶ See Introduction, section 4.

¹⁰⁷ Notable among them were Mohammed bin Rahal and Mohammed bin Mesalem, who were mentioned in the letter of Reis Rukn Al-Din, the vizier of Hormuz in 1545. See the reference to this letter in Appendix II, Doc. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VII, Liv. vii, p.110. An Ottoman account by one of those who fought in the campaign lists the men and materiel sent from Basra to Al-Hasa, including two fighting galleys (*kadirga*) and seventy light ships (*terradas*). S. Özbaran, 'Bahrain in 1559', *Osmanli Arastirmalari III, The Journal of Ottoman Studies* (Istanbul, 1982), pp. 93-94; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, p. 199. Compare with Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VII, Liv. vii, p.110; F. Al-Kandre, 'Hamlat Mustafa Pasha Ala Al-Bahrain', *Mujalat Al-Arab*, 5 (2000), pp. 256-60; C. Orhonlu, '1559 Bahreyn Seferi' trans. H. A. Al-Daquq, *Mujalat Derasat Al-khlej wa Al-Jazreerah Al-Arabiah*, 24 (1980), pp. 211-20.

¹⁰⁹ See Introduction, section 4.

¹¹⁰ Bushiri, 'The war of no battle', p. 23.

¹¹¹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. II, pp. 199-200.

¹¹² Al-Kandre, 'Hamlat Mustafa Pasha Ala Al-Bahrain', p. 256. A *grab* was a type of oared vessel. See Serjeant, *The Portuguese of the South Arabian Coast*, p. 143.

island.¹¹³ Ten vessels from the fleet were detached and sailed towards Basra, most likely to intercept any aid coming by sea from the Turkish arsenal there. Confronted with a shortage of supplies and munitions and the death of their *beglerbeg* from disease, the Turks decided to end the struggle. Even with their fleet in complete control of the island, the Portuguese also had cause to cease hostilities: seventy men had been killed and about thirty taken captive. Disease had taken its toll on both sides. Under the circumstances there was little other option left than to make peace. The Turks surrendered their arms to the Portuguese and gave a payment of 12,000 *cruzados*. In return, the Portuguese undertook to transport the remaining Turkish troops back to Qatîf.¹¹⁴ Five months after they had landed on Bahrain with 1,900 soldiers, they left Bahrain with only 200. The remaining 1,700 had died from hunger and fever.¹¹⁵

Looking at this sequence of events, there are several factors that caused the failure of the Turkish assault on Bahrain. First of all, the legitimacy of the campaign might be questioned. On 1 October 1559, the Turkish Sultan wrote to Jalal Al-Din Murad granting him the title of *Sanjak beg*, which was given to local governors under nominal Turkish rule.¹¹⁶ In the same communication Süleyman made a specific reference to the fact that Mustafa Pasha had taken it upon himself to attack Bahrain without orders from Istanbul.¹¹⁷ Second, the Turkish troops and their commanders had no clear idea about Bahrain island and its situation. This can be observed from the report written by a participant in the campaign, a minor official in Al-Hasa province.¹¹⁸ He could not define his location, which existed in name only; and he was ignorant of the geography of the Arabian Peninsula. For example, he asserted that the desert of Najd in

¹¹³ Özbaran, 'Bahrain in 1559', p. 94.

¹¹⁴ Al-Kandre, 'Hamlat Mustafa Pasha Ala Al-Bahrain', p. 260.

¹¹⁵ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VII, Liv. vii, p. 152.

¹¹⁶ Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, p. 136.

¹¹⁷ See Appendix II, Doc. 5.

¹¹⁸ Orhonlu, '1559 Bahreyn Seferi', p. 212.

the Arabian Peninsula was close to the Indian Ocean, and that Bahrain was far from Al-Hasa.¹¹⁹ Another reason for the failure of the Turkish army in the Gulf is that their weapons were not good enough, most being collected from the farmers of Al-Hasa and Qatif.¹²⁰

After several failed Turkish campaigns against the Portuguese, there emerged a military stalemate between the two. By 1560 the Portuguese were unable to establish a secure foothold in Basra and on the eastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula. Their policy became one of increasing military intervention in southern Iraq; but their apparent inability to tip the balance against the Turks, with whom the Arab population had lost its patience, led the Arabs to become more dependent on their own resources to drive out any occupying forces, including the Portuguese. This is what happened in Oman in the early seventeenth century.¹²¹ For their part, the Ottomans failed to win control over the Strait of Hormuz. Direct confrontation between the two did not cease in 1559. For example, in 1560-61 the Portuguese once again sent a fleet to assist the Arab chieftains of Basra against the Turks, lured by the promise of a permanent presence in the city. A storm dispersed the ships before they arrived at their objective.¹²²

In the medium term, however, the indecisive Bahrain campaign of 1559 had important diplomatic consequences. Commerce in the Gulf, especially between Bahrain and Hormuz, was badly affected by the war. For this reason, to encourage the flow of trade to and from their lands, the Turks tried to recast their relationship with the Portuguese in Hormuz. To this end, in 1562 the *beglerbeg* of Basra sent an envoy to Hormuz to negotiate with the Portuguese captain, Pedro de Sousa, for a resumption of

¹¹⁹ Al-Kandre, 'Hamlat Mustafa Pasha Ala Al-Bahrain', p. 256.

¹²⁰ Orhonlu, '1559 Bahreyn Seferi', p. 220.

¹²¹ See Chapter Five, below.

¹²² Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 522.

commercial relations through the Gulf.¹²³ Moreover, in 1564 Sultan Süleyman tried to consolidate his position with the Portuguese by receiving their ambassador António Teixeira.¹²⁴ Proposals arising out of the exchange provide a reasonably clear picture of Turkish priorities at this moment: free trade at Hormuz, and safe passage for people and merchants of the Ottoman Empire trading to and from lands under Portuguese domination.¹²⁵ The surviving evidence does suggest an increase in the volume of trade between the Portuguese and the Turks. In 1583, in Basra, there were various goods from India and local pearls from the Gulf islands;¹²⁶ and there was, as Linschoten points out, constant traffic between Hormuz and Basra.¹²⁷

Logically the Portuguese might have favoured measures to re-establish Hormuz as a node in the commerce between the northern Gulf and the Indian Ocean.¹²⁸ However, any agreement with the Turks would have compromised Portuguese relations with the Persian government. In weighing up the relative value of Turkish and Persian friendship in the Gulf, it is striking that the Portuguese chose the latter. As a result no agreement was signed.¹²⁹

Apart from this central guiding principal of Portugal's diplomacy, Portuguese attitudes towards the Turks in the mid-sixteenth century were confused. As Maria Cruz points out, during the reign of Sebastião the Portuguese determined to capture Basra, with its formidable Turkish presence, at the same time as they inched towards

¹²³ 'Ho ano de myll e quinhentos e sasenta e dous (1562) veo ha Ormuz hum embaixador do turquo envyado pelo baxa de Baçora ha pidir pazes ao comde vizo rei da Imdia.' ANTT, *A.G.*, vol. V, Gav. xv, 17-40, Carta de Simão da Costa a el-rei D. Sebastião, p. 137.

¹²⁴ Couto, *Décadas*, vol. VII, Liv. v, p. 44; M. Cruz, 'A < Questão de Baçorá >', p. 61.

¹²⁵ Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, p. 138. The Sultan's letter was dated 6 September 1564. See also Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. I, p. 532.

¹²⁶ E. A. Al-Juhri, 'Al-duar Al-tareakhi li Al-Basra Ala Al-khlej Al-arabi 1500-1600', *Mujalat Derasat Al-khlej wa Al-Jazreerah Al-Arabiah*, 13 (1978), p. 90.

¹²⁷ *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, vol. II, p. 35.

¹²⁸ M. L. Dames, 'The Portuguese and Turks in the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth century', *JRAS*, part 1 (1921), p. 25.

¹²⁹ M. Cruz, 'A < Questão de Baçorá > na menoridade de D. Sebastião (1557-1568)', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras*, University of Lisbon, 6 (1986), p. 49.

commercial understanding with the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁰ Portugal's failure or unwillingness to broker a lasting settlement meant an inevitable drift towards further conflict in the Gulf. Bahrain remained a buffer between the two powers, but increasingly became the object of Turkish ambitions. However, after all this time the Turks still did not fully comprehend the scale or complexities of the task in hand. This can be seen in their plans to capture Bahrain in 1573.¹³¹ Significantly, they were unsure whether or not the reduction of Bahrain was feasible, what preparations would be required for such an enterprise, and what would be the most opportune time for it. Turkish interest in Bahrain intensified in 1575, but all of these preparations eventually came to nothing.¹³²

Beyond weaknesses in intelligence and uncertain direction in policy, the question arises why the Turks failed to win any naval encounters in the Gulf, as in 1552 and 1554, or near its ports and islands, as at Bahrain in 1559? While they won most of the important battles against other Muslim powers in the East – such as at Chāldirān in 1514 and Murj Dabeq in 1516 – not a single battle was won against the Portuguese at sea, even in an enclosed sea. Turkish fleets in the Mediterranean successfully competed with the galleys of their Christian opponents, even after the battle of Lepanto in 1571 when, for instance, they took the Spanish fortress at Tunis in 1574.¹³³ This question will be examined in the following discussion.

The Ottomans emerged as a naval power only in the second half of the fifteenth century,¹³⁴ and almost all the experience that the Turkish sailors acquired was gained in

¹³⁰ Cruz, 'A < Questão de Baçorá >', p. 54.

¹³¹ See the letter to the *beglerbeg* of Al-Hasa in Appendix II, Doc. 7.

¹³² Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, p. 139.

¹³³ A. Hess, 'The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire in the Age of Ocean Discoveries', *AHR*, vol. 75, no.5 (1970), p. 1918.

¹³⁴ Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', p. 211.

the Mediterranean rather than the open sea.¹³⁵ Contrasts with the Portuguese experience are not difficult to find.

Within the Gulf more specifically, we might consider the extent to which Turkish action was influenced by the report of Salman Reis in 1525. Salman advised the sultan to confront the Portuguese at sea in order to simplify the task of expelling them from their fortifications and settlements in the East. He described the port of Jidda, full of ships and arms, as a dragon with an open mouth. He stated clearly that 'with these ships and weapons it is possible to capture in their entirety the fortresses and quays which the infidels rule in the land of India'.¹³⁶ However, as Özbaran notes, this was certainly not an accurate assessment of the Ottoman Indian Ocean naval establishment.¹³⁷ Moreover, it could be argued from the conflict between the Portuguese and the Turks that neither power learned much from their naval encounters. After the battles of Diu in 1508 and 1538 the Portuguese could not prevent Muslim vessels from the Red Sea coming against them in the Indian Ocean, or even in the Gulf. The Turks, on the other hand, did not understand that Mediterranean ship types were unable to serve safely in the Indian Ocean.¹³⁸ They were not ocean-going vessels and were inferior in armament to the Portuguese Indiamen.¹³⁹ In addition, the Turks not only faced Portuguese forces in the Gulf; they also had to deal with the climatic conditions. Belgrave was wrong to suggest that the Turks were less affected by climate and disease than the Portuguese.¹⁴⁰ As noted in the introduction to this thesis, any foreign naval

¹³⁵ Hess, 'The Evolution of the Ottoman Seaborne Empire in the Age of Ocean Discoveries', p. 1918.

¹³⁶ Özbaran, 'A Turkish report on the Red Sea and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, 1525', pp. 83-4.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age*, p. 55.

¹³⁸ Serjeant, *The Portuguese of the South Arabian Coast*, pp. 2-3.

¹³⁹ Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', p. 272.

¹⁴⁰ C. Belgrave, *The Pirate Coast*, p. 8.

power in the Gulf would be handicapped by inadequate information about the region's climate and sea conditions.¹⁴¹

Until the beginning of the seventeenth century the Turkish navy in the Gulf was unable to fight on equal terms against the Portuguese or the English. In fact in 1607 it was observed that a single English ship could defeat ten Turkish galleys.¹⁴² The Turkish ships were poorly built and badly maintained. In addition, they were heavier and less manageable than those in the European navies,¹⁴³ even if it seems that the ships of the Indian Ocean were better built than the galleys of the imperial fleet. Indeed, it is recorded that the Portuguese met Turkish fleets which had guns of good quality, in general, and trained gunners whose skill at Diu in 1538 excited the admiration of their opponents.¹⁴⁴ From this we can assume that, perhaps, the chief defect in the Turkish navy was not in the arms or ships, but in the administration and leadership of the fleets. The Diu campaign of 1538 and that in the Gulf of 1552 give evidence of that. Even Seydî Ali Reis, who was one of the best-known naval commanders in the Mediterranean, could not safely navigate near Ras al-Had on the Omani shore to enter Bab Al-Mandab. He discarded his heavy cannon in order to reach the Indian coast.¹⁴⁵ These problems doubtless arose through lack of experience and ignorance of the works of Ahmed Ibn Majid,¹⁴⁶ although Seydî Ali himself authored a work called *Mohit* into which he integrated information about navigation, routes, the monsoon system, and the

¹⁴¹ See Introduction, section 4.

¹⁴² H. Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600* (London, 1973), p. 44.

¹⁴³ Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', p. 225.

¹⁴⁴ Q. Al-Nahrwali, *Al-Barq Al-Yamani fi Al-Fath Al-Osmani*, p. 70; in 1538, Süleyman Pasha set sail with 72 ships against the *Estado da Índia* of Portugal. *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age*, p. 61.

¹⁴⁵ *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral Seydî Ali Reis*, pp. 16-7.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Majid said of navigation near the Gujarat coast: 'the head of the Gujarat coast extends more in the sea, and it is closer to the Arab land than to the Indian shore'. In addition, he gave a warning to navigators wanting to sail in those waters. See S. Ibn Majid, *Kitab Al-Fawâid fi Usûl Ilm Al-bahr wa Al-qawâ'd*, p. 266.

sailing seasons of the Indian Ocean.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it was difficult for the Ottomans to solve their naval difficulties when the balance of sea power in the Gulf was so tilted against them.

After two unsuccessful attempts in the Gulf to save their fleet, the Turks had to be satisfied with establishing themselves as a land-based power on the north-west of the Gulf coast in Basra and Al-Hasa. The Turks were never able to maintain a large fleet in the Gulf after the disasters of 1552 and 1554, and this left them with insufficient forces to mount a large-scale campaign. There were also other obstacles to Basra being a strategic base for Turkish forces. The city was far from any natural sources of timber or other naval stores,¹⁴⁸ and the fact that the suburbs of the city were centres of Arab tribal rebellion prevented supplies from reaching Basra.¹⁴⁹

Consequently the function of Turkish ships in the Gulf after 1552 was no more than to patrol its waters from time to time and to observe Portuguese or local Arab activities, in particular in the district of Al-Jazir.¹⁵⁰

A final point to discuss here is why the people of the Gulf did not assist the Turks against the Portuguese, especially given what might be regarded as their natural religious sympathies. There may be several reasons. On the one hand, the Turks generally did not trust the Arabs, and their relations with the tribes of Iraq gave them an unfavourable impression of Arab attitudes. Even in Syria, Egypt, and Yemen they did not employ Arabs in their army or as commanders in their navy. On the other hand, Turkish taxes, in particular the *iltizam* finance system,¹⁵¹ were as harmful to the Gulf

¹⁴⁷ T. A. Shumovskii, *Ahmed Bin Majid, Three Flowers in Knowing the Seas*. Trans. Mohammed Muner Morsi. (Cairo, 1969), p. 70.

¹⁴⁸ Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', p. 273.

¹⁴⁹ The revolt of Ibn Ūlyaan is an example. See above p. 185, footnote 60.

¹⁵⁰ Özbaran, 'The Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf, 1534-1581', p. 69; Imber, 'The Navy of Süleyman the Magnificent', p. 273.

¹⁵¹ Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, pp. 28-9.

Arabs as they were to other peoples brought under Ottoman rule during the early sixteenth century. All the fixed annual sums produced by the tax went to Istanbul and nothing worthwhile remained to fund local development. This was symptomatic of a broader Ottoman disregard for their Arabic subjects, which sometimes led to injustice.¹⁵² As a result the people of the Gulf evidently did not relish their position as Turkish subjects.¹⁵³ After they entered the Gulf, the Ottomans did not realise, until the Bahrain campaign of 1559, that even though the inhabitants of the western coast regarded the Ottomans as their saviours from Portuguese violence, they did not want to exchange one occupation force for another. In addition, most of the inhabitants on the western coast of the Gulf and Bahrain were Shiites and the Ottomans were Sunnites, which adversely affected their relations. This was manifested in the campaign against the Portuguese in Bahrain in 1559.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, the Shiites in southern Iraq and on the west coast of the Gulf stood with the Safavids rather than the Turks.

4.3. Conflict between the Portuguese and Safavid Persia

The character of the Gulf was completely changed at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the emergence of two military powers stronger than Hormuz: the Portuguese with their maritime control; and the Safavid dynasty on the Iranian mainland. The original Safavid dominions were north of Persia. By 1503 they had occupied Shiraz,¹⁵⁵ and a few years later, by 1508, Shah Ismail ruled over Iraq Al-Arab and the former Mushasha territories near Basra, through which the Safavids came close to one of the

¹⁵² Özbaran, *The Ottoman Response to European Expansion*, p. 30.

¹⁵³ An Ottoman document in the Bahrain Archive mentions that Mustafa Pasha, the *beglerbeg* of Al-Hasa, seized the property of a notable Arab merchant in Al-Hasa province called Jumah bin Rahal. In response he took all the pearl diving ships belonging to him and fled to Bahrain where he fought with Jalal Al-Din Murad against the Turks in the campaign of 1559. This also shows that administrative corruption was not a uniquely Portuguese problem. See Aba Hussain, 'The Ottoman Documents in the Bahrain Archives', doc. MD 3, p. 379.

¹⁵⁴ See Bushiri, 'The war of no battle - Bahrain in 1559', pp. 20-7; Al-Kandre, 'Hamlat Mustafa Pasha Ala Al-Bahrain', pp. 256-60; Orhonlu, '1559 Bahreyn Seferi', pp. 211- 20.

¹⁵⁵ P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p. 159; P. Savory, *Studies on the History of Safawid Iran*, p. 79.

main outlets of trade in the Gulf. Shah Ismail attempted to eradicate the Mushasha tribes in Basra, but failed.¹⁵⁶ Instead, the shah was content with tributes from the chieftains of those tribes.¹⁵⁷ Southern Iraq, which was ruled by a branch of the Muntafiq Arab tribe, also became subject to Safavid overlordship.¹⁵⁸

Soon after these advances into Iraq Al-Arab, Ismail also received the submission of Lār and Hormuz. Following old custom, Hormuz continued paying *muqarrariya* to the new rulers of Persia for some time; but we have already noted the surprise in 1508 when Safavid envoys to Hormuz encountered the Portuguese who forced them to return empty-handed.¹⁵⁹ It should be remembered that the Portuguese arrived during a struggle between the Muslim powers of the Middle East, and during a period when regional power structures were being redefined. The Ottoman and Safavid territories were still expanding, and Persian policy in the Gulf was based on the consideration that conflict with the Turks was inevitable.

The occupation of Iraq brought the Safavids closer to Aleppo than the Turks, but this does not mean that they had any strategy of their own to control the mainland trade routes at such an early stage. It is true that the Persians pushed the silk trade northwards to areas around the Caspian Sea, where most silk production was concentrated; but the problem was that they had to export silk to Europe through Turkish territory.¹⁶⁰ Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) therefore made numerous approaches to Europeans in the hope of gaining political support against the Ottomans and, at the same time, an outlet for Persian products by a more direct route.¹⁶¹ In short, Persia worked to avoid the Basra-Aleppo route which at that time was in Turkish hands.

¹⁵⁶ R. Q. M. Merkhund, *Tareakh Rawdet Al-safa Nasri* (Tehran, 1339 H.), vol. 8, p. 23.

¹⁵⁷ E. A. Al-Juhri, 'Al-duar Al-tareakhi li Al-Basra Ala Al-khlej Al-arabi 1500-1600', p. 86.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Azzawi, *Tarekh Al-Iraq bayna Ihtilalayn*, vol. IV, p. 49.

¹⁵⁹ See Chapter Three, section 3.

¹⁶⁰ M. Meilink-Roelofez, *The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands*, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ A. Bocarro, *Década 13*, part I, p. 33.

As mentioned in the last chapter, Portuguese plans to win the Safavids as allies against the Ottomans proliferated in the early years of the Union, but were doomed to failure.¹⁶² Indeed, the fate of Portuguese Hormuz was sealed with the accession of Shah Abbas.¹⁶³ One important keynote of his reign was the alteration of Safavid military power through reform and modernisation. These reforms, as Lambton states, depended on new regiments recruited from non-tribal elements, chiefly Georgians and Armenian converts to Islam.¹⁶⁴ The purpose was to make the state less dependent on the traditionally armed dervishes or *Qizilbāsh*.¹⁶⁵ It was these Turkoman tribes, and not the Persians, who had secured the throne for Ismail I by their military and political support.¹⁶⁶ If Ismail and his son Tahmāsp spent much of their reigns in a delicate balancing act between the Turkomans, the *Qizilbash* and the Tajiks, then Shah Abbas was able to turn his attention to overseas and overland trade as a major source of state revenue.¹⁶⁷ Englishmen played an influential part in these developments.¹⁶⁸ Certainly, the Shah sent the Sherleys as his envoys to the Pope and to various European royal courts to enlist support against their common enemy, the Ottomans.¹⁶⁹

The effects of Shah Abbas's reforms were widely felt. Lār and Shiraz both played an important part in political events in Persia and the Gulf during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The conquests of Qishm and Hormuz were

¹⁶² Bocarro, *Década 13*, part I, pp. 34-6.

¹⁶³ Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p. 172.

¹⁶⁴ A. K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (London, 1953), p. 107.

¹⁶⁵ Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p. 176.

¹⁶⁶ P. Sykes, *Persia* (Oxford, 1922), p. 72.

¹⁶⁷ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 26.

¹⁶⁸ N. Falsafi, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, (Tehran, 1371 S.), vol. 4, pp. 1297-1304; R. E. Denison, *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (London, 1933), pp. 116-17. The Persians learned how to use guns, as Curzon mentions, since the Portuguese provided Shah Tahmāsp with auxiliaries against the Turks. By the help of Sherleys' sons the new troops of the Shah, recently equipped with firearms, were better able to oppose the Turkish forces. See Curzon, *Persia and the Persian question*, vol. I, p. 573; Meilink-Roelofez, *The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, pp. 114-65, 225; Savory, *Studies on the History of Safawid Iran*, p. 76; W. Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, pp. 296-98; Falsafi, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1573.

the work of the governor of Fārs province, Imām Qlui Khān, the son of Allah-Verdi Khān, a Georgian convert to Islam whose career epitomises the success of Abbas's military reforms.¹⁷⁰ Imām Qlui Khān set up the administration in the newly acquired territories as Khān of Lār and conqueror of the island. It would seem that Imām Qlui Khān held his territories as a hereditary fief, in the same way as under the Seljuq system.¹⁷¹

At some point, there was a significant change in Persian diplomacy in the Gulf; a shift away from the Portuguese as potential allies and towards the Ottomans, their long-standing enemies. It is important to identify some of the factors that brought about this pivotal change in policy, though it is easier to understand if pragmatism is seen as a common influence in Persian actions.¹⁷²

First, the Persians came physically closer to Hormuz after the Shah established his headquarters at Isfahan. The Shah used a 'step-by-step' strategy to occupy several important points in the Gulf which were under Portuguese control. Results included the capture of Bahrain in 1602, Qishm in 1608, Gombroon in 1614, and attacks on other Portuguese garrisons in the Gulf.¹⁷³ Shah Abbas firmly believed that the Portuguese were invaders who unfairly monopolised the wealth of Hormuz, but he nonetheless chose diplomatic means of dealing with them while he was at war with the Ottomans. Economic factors led the Shah to doubt his policy towards both the Portuguese and the Turks. International outlets for the silk trade – a Persian royal monopoly – were controlled by one or the other. Thus, in August 1602 the Shah welcomed the Spanish-Portuguese envoy, the Augustinian António de Gouvea.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Abbas appointed

¹⁷⁰ Falsafi, *Zendaḡané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, pp. 1541-42.

¹⁷¹ Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, p. 107.

¹⁷² See Chapter Five.

¹⁷³ Abbas, *Mutalate Der Bab Bahrain Wa Jazair Khaleej Fars*, p. 79.

¹⁷⁴ A. de Gouvea, *Relaçam em que se tratam as Guerras e Grandes victorias que alcançou o grãde Rey da Persia Xá Abbas do grãdo Turco Mahometto, & seu filho Amethe* (Lisbon, 1611), Liv. I, f. 17. De Gouvea wrote his book at Goa in April 1609.

by *faramān* Imām Quli Khān as the governor of Fārs province to succeed his father immediately after the latter died during the first siege of Gombroon. The Shah incited Imām Quli Khān to get revenge for his father's death by ordering him to occupy Gombroon, the main Portuguese trade centre on the Persian mainland.¹⁷⁵

Additionally, Persia's commercial relationship with the English and the appearance of East India Company fleets in the Gulf in the 1610s changed Persian policy towards the Portuguese. Evidence of Spanish commitment to the war against the Turks was negligible which led the Persians to look elsewhere.¹⁷⁶ The English provided a suitable alternative.

With a more modern army at his disposal, at the beginning of the seventeenth century Abbas felt confident enough to challenge Portuguese occupied Hormuz and Bahrain in preference to attacking the Turks.¹⁷⁷ Yet the Persians were cautious in their dealings with the Portuguese. They avoided direct conflict, knowing very well the strength of the Portuguese navy. Essentially, Abbas played a political game with the Spanish-Portuguese crown. On the one hand, he demonstrated to the king of Spain his quiet diplomacy by sending several ambassadors and envoys to Madrid, like Allah Verdi Beg and Bastam Quli Beg.¹⁷⁸ In addition, he sent Hussain Ali Beg with Anthony Sherley to Spain and Europe with a message promising privileges in the silk trade for active support against the Turks.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, he threatened the Portuguese in the Gulf on specific occasions and used the shadow rulers of Lār and Shiraz. Thus, politically, Abbas was more careful and successful than the Turks in his relations with the Portuguese.

¹⁷⁵ M. Aqeel, *Al-Tanfous Al-Duali fi Al- Khaleej Al-Arabi 1622-1763*, (Qatar, 1991), p. 61.

¹⁷⁶ Falsafi, *Zendaḡané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1492.

¹⁷⁶ Aqeel, *Al-Tanfous Al-Duali fi Al- Khaleej Al-Arabi 1622-1763*, p. 61.

¹⁷⁷ Sykes, *Persia*, p. 79.

¹⁷⁸ Bocarro, *Década 13*, part I, p. 33; *DRI*, vol. I. p. 11.

¹⁷⁹ Falsafi, *Zendaḡané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1471-73.

The first test of Persian strength against the Portuguese was in Bahrain and it came with little warning or planning. In 1601 Turan Shah VI died and was succeeded by his son Feruz Shah.¹⁸⁰ The succession in Hormuz did not pass without incident. After a few months, at the beginning of 1602, Rukn Al-Din Mas'ud, brother of the vizier and a distant relative of the Lord of Fāl, Mu'in Al-Din Fāli, revolted against Portuguese rule in Bahrain. Mas'ud's fear of Portugal's naval forces led him to call for Persian support.¹⁸¹ Shah Abbas grasped this opportunity. He entrusted the task of occupying Bahrain to Allah-Verdi Khān, the governor of Fārs province.¹⁸² Allah-Verdi Khān sent a force to Bahrain which, with the co-operation of Mas'ud's troops, reduced the Portuguese garrison to submission. This shows clearly that Bahrain was captured by treason, not by direct confrontation against the Portuguese.¹⁸³ Once victory was assured, the cycle of treachery was completed by the murder of Rukn Al-Din Mas'ud by the Persians, which led to open conflict between the forces within Bahrain. It took the arrival of Persian reinforcements, who had been delayed en route, to retrieve the situation. Thereafter the Persians had to face the Portuguese force of Francisco de Sotomayor, which Allah-Verdi Khān countered by sending a diversionary expedition to invest the port of Gombroon (Bandar Abbas)¹⁸⁴ The Portuguese would have recaptured Bahrain in 1603 when they sent Jorge de Castelo Branco with a fleet from Goa,¹⁸⁵ but

¹⁸⁰ See Appendix I, no. 4.

¹⁸¹ Falsafi, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1486-87. The other story of the event, was given by António Gouvea, who was in Hormuz shortly after the seizure of Bahrain. He said: 'The *guazil* (vizier) of Bahrain who was the nephew of the Reis of Hormuz, having put to death a rich (rico) Persian merchant, whose pearls he coveted, was in turn assassinated by the merchant's brother (Rukn Al-Din Mas'ud), who then seized the fort for the Persians'. See de Gouvea, *Relaçam em que se tratam as Guerras e Grandes victorias que alcançou o grãde Rey da Persia Xá Abbas do grão Turco Mahometto, & seu filho Amethe*, Liv. I, ff. 15- ff. 16.

¹⁸² Falsafi, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1486.

¹⁸³ *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, p. 174.

¹⁸⁴ Gouvea, *Relaçam*, Liv. I, f. 16. Bandar in Persian, in the Portuguese sources known as Gomrūn, is near Bandel or Band Ali. Bandar Abbas, is in the immediate vicinity of Naband. Bandar Abbas stands on a bay about 16 km to the north of the eastern end of Qishm island, and 12 km from Hormuz. See A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies* (London, 1930), pp. 59-60.

¹⁸⁵ Gouvea, *Relaçam*, Liv. I, ff. 16-17.

Allah-Verdi Khān again besieged Gombroon. Not only that, but he seized the territories at Gombroon of the kingdom of Hormuz. The Persian forces succeeded in holding the island against several attempts by the Portuguese and Hormuzians to recover it.¹⁸⁶ The Portuguese thus failed to retake the island, and the Persian vizier was put in charge of the administration of Bahrain.¹⁸⁷

The capture of Gombroon was the second test of Shah Abbas's strength in the Gulf. Gombroon itself was merely an insignificant fishing village, but it was situated opposite Hormuz and served as a point of transshipment for caravans carrying goods to and from the city.¹⁸⁸ When Safavid troops pushed southwards to claim the *muqarrariya*, they found Gombroon inadequately defended.¹⁸⁹ The Sultan of Shiraz occupied Qishm for the first time in 1608 and had a fortress erected next to the derelict Portuguese building.¹⁹⁰ After some years of uneasy truce, Lisbon received news of the fall of Gombroon into Persian hands in 1614.¹⁹¹ Initially, the commanding officers of the occupying force under Imām Qlui Khān doubled as military administrators of the coastal district.¹⁹²

The expulsion of the Portuguese from Bahrain in 1602 was the prelude to their expulsion from Hormuz and eventually from the whole Gulf. In 1603, after the fall of Bahrain, Shah Abbas opened serious negotiations with the English, offering them a

¹⁸⁶ Gouvea, *Relaçam*, Liv. I, f. 63.

¹⁸⁷ East India Company, *Letters received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East* (London, 1896-1902), vol. 2, pp. 99-100.

¹⁸⁸ Bocarro, *Década 13*, part II, pp. 511-12.

¹⁸⁹ *DRI*, I, pp. 218-19, letter from King Philip III to the viceroy, Martim Afonso de Castro, dated 15 March 1608, Lisbon.

¹⁹⁰ N. Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 251.

¹⁹¹ *DRI*, vol. I, p. 219, King Philip II to viceroy Jeronimo de Azevedo, dated 5 March 1615, based on a letter from Luís de Gama, capitao de Ormuz; Bocarro, *Década 13*, part I, pp. 344-45.

¹⁹² Falsafī, *Zendaġané Shah `Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, pp. 1482, 1519.

share of the silk trade in return for help against the Portuguese.¹⁹³ These negotiations ended in co-operation between the two powers, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

It was lamentable for the Portuguese that Shah Abbas signed a peace treaty with the Turks in 1618.¹⁹⁴ Thereafter, Persia felt confident enough to engineer the ejection of the Portuguese from Hormuz, where their presence had become intolerable. The Portuguese, in order to defend their presence in the Gulf, never attempted to march from Hormuz into Persia, launch an invasion, and attack the Shah of Persia in his capital, as the Ottomans did. They simply lacked the resources in Hormuz to do this. Ironically, the main military weakness of the Portuguese in the Gulf was rooted in a presumed strength of their overall system – namely their commitment to sea power at the expense of extensive territorial acquisitions.

In fact we cannot only blame the Portuguese authorities in Goa or in the Gulf for the errors that occurred in these regions. We should not forget that the system of Portuguese rule was becoming rather old fashioned by the end of sixteenth century, in particular after the annexation of Portugal by Spain in 1580. If after sixty years the Portuguese still lacked full control of the region, and were still slow to appreciate the possibilities and pitfalls of regional diplomacy, then how after 1580 could the Spanish begin to understand the Gulf region, its peoples, and its powers?

The Spanish Crown surely inherited a frail and flawed ‘system’ whose remarkable achievement had been to survive more or less intact for over half a century. Indeed, given these weaknesses, one might suggest that the longevity of Portuguese rule was itself surprising. It follows logically to consider why the Portuguese presence lasted so long if their structures of authority were so weak. Perhaps the Portuguese were more resilient than we think. The survival of the Portuguese in the Gulf owed something to

¹⁹³ Bocarro, *Década 13*, part I, pp. 33-6.

¹⁹⁴ R. Jaffariyān, *Safwah as Duhwr ta Zawal 950–1135 H.D*, p. 277.

their own strength and adaptability, their good fortune, and the disorganisation of their enemies. After hanging onto Hormuz for almost a century, by the beginning of the seventeenth century at least one of these three pre-conditions of survival had changed.

Chapter Five: The Collapse of Portuguese Authority in the Gulf

'If you see European ships anchor off this bar [Hormuz],
flood the moat, and sleep in peace'
(Afonso da Albuquerque)

The object of this final chapter is to outline and assess the breakdown of Portuguese military and political authority in the Arabian Gulf during the seventeenth century, with particular emphasis on the fall of Hormuz in 1622. The background, the advent of sustained European competition to the Portuguese and the intrusions of the Dutch and English, and the military events specific to the region have been discussed elsewhere. They will not be repeated at length here – a blow-by-blow account of the campaign against Portugal in the Gulf would be superfluous. Sufficient material will be provided to orient the reader.

Instead, this discussion seeks to examine the events, and the fall of Hormuz in particular, from an 'internal' Gulf perspective, and with an emphasis on regional diplomacy rather than military hardware. Though the Gulf was a fertile area for the ambitions of the English and the Dutch, the collapse of Portuguese authority in the region was much more than a struggle between the European powers. Many discussions of the fall of Hormuz neglect the ambitions of, and interplay between, the peoples of the Gulf. In this context, particular emphasis will be laid on the policy of Shah Abbas towards the Arab tribes on the Persian coastline, the region of 'Arabistān', at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This seems to be the key to understanding the collapse of Portugal's position in the Gulf. Acutely aware of his inability to launch a naval expedition against Hormuz, the shah cultivated relationships with the coastal Arabs, in particular those who were resident in Bushahr and Bandar Rig. These people owned numerous *terradas* which they used in small-scale trade within the Gulf. They were good sailors; they understood the climate and they possessed intimate knowledge of the

coastline. To win the Arabs over and to ensure their loyalty, the shah exploited their shared Shia faith. In this light, Portugal's handling of relations with the Arab peoples is almost as important as its dealings with Persia in properly understanding the fall of Hormuz. Even after a century of experience in the Gulf, the Portuguese did not recognise the importance of fostering local support for their regime. They neglected this support at a crucial moment; the captains were too much involved in business to be aware of the emergence of new powers on both shores of the Gulf. Though the Arab tribes were still growing in influence at the beginning of the century, by its end they had become extremely important. The isolation of Hormuz and the gradual envelopment of the kingdom's territories will be one of the principal themes under discussion, though attention will also be paid to the leading actors of the drama such as Ruy Freire.

That said, the Gulf cannot be divorced from the rest of the Portuguese empire since economically, as well as administratively, Hormuz and Bahrain were part of a much larger system. The physical danger to the *Carreira da Índia's* shipping in the Atlantic, posed by Dutch and English ships, increased markedly during the reign of Philip III (1598-1621). The danger also arose directly in Asia at the sources of spices and other goods bound for the European market. This Dutch and English challenge to the Portuguese Cape route and the Asian country trades, and the Portuguese responses to the challenge, dominated this period.¹

5.1. The Challenge of the East India Companies

England's interest in Asian trade began a century before the founding of the East India Company, after the epic voyages of Columbus and da Gama led both Iberian powers to partition and monopolise the world's trade.² Perhaps from that time originated the

¹ J. C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640* (Baltimore and London, 1993), p. 86.

² P. Lawson, *The East India Company: a History* (London, 1993), pp. 7-8.

question of how to break this Iberian monopoly – a monopoly, it must be remembered, which the Protestant powers did not recognize. One well known example came in May 1527 with Robert Thorne’s suggestion of reaching India by sailing to the north-west. Thorne returned in October with nothing of value. All attempts to reach India by this route ended in failure.³ The merchant-adventurer Anthony Jenkinson made a rather more practical contribution to the establishment of English commercial interests in the east. In 1561 he undertook his second overland expedition to Asia, travelling from England with instructions to open up commercial relations with Persia across Russia.⁴ Though Jenkinson’s expedition was an isolated episode which left no mark on the country – Shah Tahmasp refused to deal with the ‘unbelievers’⁵ – such enterprises were nonetheless statements of intent. They were part of the same incremental process which took Englishmen to the African coast, the Levant, Russia, and the eastern American seaboard.⁶ English self-confidence was boosted by the defeat of the Armada in 1588, and perhaps militant Protestant imperialism, drawing on widespread anti-Catholicism, was just as important as commercial ambition in drawing the English into the wider world.⁷ The Spanish war offered outlets for both. Either way, the post-Armada period was important in the formation of England’s Asian interests.⁸

By 1600 the English were ready to sail east around the Cape of Good Hope using accounts written by a handful of English adventurers like Ralph Fitch, or the

³ See D. Loades, *England's Maritime Empire* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 33-4; D. B. Quinn and A. N. Ryan, *England's Sea Empire, 1550-1642* (London, 1983), p. 138; R. Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (New York and London, 1974), pp. 60-1.

⁴ For details see *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and other Englishmen*, ed. E. D. Morgan and C. A. Coote, (London, 1886); W. Foster, *England's Quest of Eastern Trade*, pp. 14, 47.

⁵ R. Jaffariyān, *Safwah as Duhwr ta Zawāl 950 – 1135 H.D.*, p. 139.

⁶ *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. N. Canny (Oxford, 1998), vol. I, chapters 11, 12.

⁷ J. C. Appleby, ‘War, Politics, and Colonisation, 1558-1625’, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. I, p. 56.

⁸ Loades, *England's Maritime Empire*, pp. 120-21; Quinn and Ryan, *England's Sea Empire*, chapter 5, pp. 133-53; J. C. Appleby, ‘War, Politics, and Colonisation, 1558-1625’, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. I, pp. 55-78; F. Fernández-Armesto, *The Spanish Armada* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 269-70.

Hollander Jan Huyghen Van Linschoten, about the riches of the East and Portugal's grip on the region.⁹ After the threat of Spanish invasion passed, a group of merchants petitioned Elizabeth I and were granted permission to trade with India.¹⁰ The first expedition of the new company – the Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies – began in 1601 under James Lancaster.¹¹ This was the beginning of the body that came to be known as the English East India Company (EIC).¹² Though in due course the Company succeeded in securing a foothold in India, its early voyages were directed towards the Spice Islands, and especially the Moluccas. The principal interest of the English, like other Europeans before them, was in the procurement of pepper and other spices.¹³ Thus, from 1613 Sumatra became the chief supplier of pepper to the Company. However, to diversify its activities, the Company exploited the existing carrying trade, and found a market for English woollens. Rapid progress was made. The Company was soon dispatching ships to Gujarat and to the Coromandel coast.¹⁴ Thus, in 1608 the first English ship arrived at the Gujarati port of Surat;¹⁵ and in 1612 the Company obtained a *farmān* from the Mughal emperor confirming the trading agreement there.¹⁶ Surat later became the first English headquarters in India and the centre of the Company's commercial operations with the Red Sea and the Gulf. Moreover, in 1616 the EIC established factories at Calicut and several other Indian

⁹ Mukherjee, *The Rise and fall of the East India Company*, p. 59; P. J. Marshall, 'The English in Asia to 1700', *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. I, p. 267.

¹⁰ Sykes, *A History of Persia*, p. 188.

¹¹ J. Keay, *The Honourable Company* (London, 1993), p. 14.

¹² For background see O. Prakash, 'The English East Indian Company and India', in *The Worlds of the East India Company*, ed. H. V. Bowen, M. Lincoln and N. Rigby, (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 1-16; V. Joseph, *A History of the British East India Company 1615-1858* (Cheddar, 1987), p. 13.

¹³ B. P. Lenman, 'The East Indian Company and the Trade in Non-Metallic Precious Materials', in *The Worlds of the East India Company*, pp. 101-02. The EIC also became involved in the diamond trade of Borneo which the Portuguese controlled before the company arrived.

¹⁴ P. J. Marshall, 'The English in Asia to 1700', p. 270.

¹⁵ To encourage foreign traders in Surat, the English and the Dutch companies had to pay less than four and five per cent duty on all their goods there. J. Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. I, p. 8.

¹⁶ G. Birdwood, *Report on the old Records of the India Office*, (London, 1890), pp. 209, 211.

cities.¹⁷ Step by step, then, the EIC became much more than a maritime commercial organisation as it evolved into a powerful imperial agency.¹⁸

The EIC's first contact with the Arabian Peninsula occurred in 1607, when the company instructed its third expedition to proceed to Bantam via the Arabian Sea. Lancaster advised the Company to use the Arabian Sea as a distinct trading basin, with the Gujarat-Red Sea axis as its main trade route. This opened the possibility of relocating the Company's existing and much troubled trade with the Spice Islands to Aden or Surat.¹⁹

From 1614, the English also tried to gain a foothold in Persia.²⁰ The large stocks of cloth there must have influenced these efforts.²¹ In 1616, with the help of Robert Sherley, three identical Persian *farmāns* were obtained from the Shah ordering the governors of the ports in Persia to assist English vessels in the Gulf.²² Quickly the English established themselves in Jask, to the south of Portuguese occupied Hormuz, just inside the Gulf.²³ Three years later, in 1619, the Company established a factory there to facilitate overland trade with the Persian capital at Isfahan.²⁴ From this strategic point, and notwithstanding Portuguese control of the Persian coast, the English aimed to

¹⁷ Birdwood, *Report on the old Records of the India Office*, pp. 209, 211; Prakash, 'The English East Indian Company and India', pp. 3-4; Joseph, *A History of the British East India Company 1615-1858*, p. 13.

¹⁸ H. V. Bowen, 'No Longer Mere Trade': Continuities and Change in the Metropolitan Development of the East India Company, 1600-1834', *The Worlds of the East India Company*, p. 19.

¹⁹ Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 73.

²⁰ Foster, *England's Quest of eastern trade*, pp. 295-305.

²¹ R. W. Ferrier, 'The Armenians and the East India Company in Persia in the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries', *ECHR*, 26 (1973), p. 41.

²² B. Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 33.

²³ After examining numerous places such as Gombroon, Batinha, Bahrain, Rayshahr, and Jask, they opted for the latter, which was situated about ninety miles (30 leagues) east of Hormuz. See East India Company., *Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East* (London, 1896-1902), vol. 2, pp. 145-46, 208-9; *The Register of letters & c. Of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies 1600-1619*, ed. G. Birdwood and William Foster (London, 1893), p. 458, n. 1.

²⁴ Birdwood, *Report on the old Records of the India Office*, p. 212; Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 139.

break into the Persian trade.²⁵ This was initially in jewels which were bought and forwarded for sale in Aleppo and Istanbul.²⁶ The presence and activities of these English agents undoubtedly affected Portuguese control of the area; yet at this point the Company comprised nothing more than peaceful traders with no direct military confrontations between the two. Portugal's reaction, however, was hostile. In July 1609 William Finch was able to conclude that 'The Portuguese are still the fundamental cause of all our losses in India'.²⁷

From a Persian perspective it should be remembered that at the beginning of the seventeenth century Shah Abbas was still trying to establish contact with European rulers to form an alliance against the Ottomans. Central to this was the opening of a route for the exportation of Persian silk outside the area controlled by the Turks.²⁸ To this end the Shah granted by *farmān* important privileges to Christian merchants who wanted to trade with Persia; and because freedom of religion was as important at that time as trade, the Shah also promised security to all, including the free exercise of their faith.²⁹

Within Persia the silk trade was monopolised by the royal family. According to Della Valle, Shah Abbas was the greatest merchant in Persia.³⁰ The Shah was nominally responsible for buying silk from local farmers and exporting it through the Gulf to foreign buyers.³¹ But, one may ask, why was silk sent through the Gulf and not directly to India or to Europe via the overland route? The answer is quite simple. Since the Turks occupied the old route between Persia and Europe, Abbas sought to deprive them

²⁵ Foster, *England's Quest of eastern trade*, p. 298.

²⁶ Lenman, 'The East Indian Company and the Trade in Non-Metallic Precious Materials', p. 104.

²⁷ *Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East*, vol. 1, p. 26.

²⁸ See Chapter Three, section 3.

²⁹ M. Samnani, *Shah Abbas Kabir*, pp. 108-10; Falsafi, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1477.

³⁰ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. II, p. 334.

³¹ Samnani, *Shah Abbas Kabir*, p. 110. The revenue annual of the trade silk was about 8 million Persian *tūmān*.

of the customs which they levied from silk, and to get a better price. More broadly, the Shah hoped to keep the Gulf route under his control, not only for the sake of his kingdom's economy, but also for his personal benefit. With some success he forced Armenian merchants and others to help him make his new capital city of Isfahan a commercial centre to rival Hormuz. Commercial ambition was a characteristic of the Shah's reign, and is visible in many of policies; and it was ultimately the reason why he ousted the Portuguese from Bahrain, Gombroon, Qishm and finally from Hormuz.³²

The Dutch appeared relatively late in Eastern waters, between 1595 and 1597, as a result of the outbreak of revolt against Spain with the consequent, and irreparable, damage done to Antwerp in 1585 as the staple market of Asian spices in north-western Europe.³³ In 1595 the first Dutch ships arrived on the Indian coast.³⁴ The birth of the Dutch East Indian Company (or VOC) followed in March 1602 with a charter granted by the States-General. Like its English rival, the Dutch Company was a joint-stock monopoly corporation.³⁵ The Portuguese example showed the Dutch the need for a centre of shipping, trade and governance in the East. They also came to the conclusion that a monopoly of spices was necessary for profitable trade in these commodities.³⁶

³² W. Floor, *The Economy of Safavid Persia* (Wiesbaden, 2000) p. 61.

³³ Prakash, 'The English East Indian Company and India', p. 2. For background to these events see J. L. Price, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1998), pp. 1-15.

³⁴ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. I, p. xii.

³⁵ Prakash, 'The English East Indian Company and India', p. 2. The Dutch East India Company (the *Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie* or VOC), was a very large and complex organisation founded from the unification of six smaller companies that had been trading to the East since 1594. In little more than a decade the Company established 28 factories and 15 fortresses in East and South East Asia. See EIC, *Letters received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, vol. 2, pp. 309-10; F. S. Gaastra, 'War, Competition and Collaboration: Relations between the English and Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in *The Worlds of the East Indian Company*, p. 50; B. J. Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, pp. 69-72. See also J. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford, 1982).

³⁶ Gaastra, 'War, Competition and Collaboration', p. 50.

Bypassing the Gulf region, the Dutch initially paid more attention to South-East Asia, in particular Sumatra, Java and Borneo.³⁷ Before too long, however, in 1611, the first contact between the Dutch and Persia was brought about by the younger brother of Robert Sherley, with the purpose of gaining a share in the Persian silk trade.³⁸ Shah Abbas subsequently approached them without the knowledge of the English. In 1614 a number of Amsterdam merchants, some of whom were involved with the VOC, tried to promote business with Persia through Russia.³⁹ Two years later the Dutch established themselves at Surat, following the English and exacerbating Portuguese concerns about their security there.⁴⁰ The commercial possibilities of silk were already evident in 1603, when the Dutch captured a laden Portuguese merchantman and sold her cargo for a huge sum.⁴¹ However, the purpose of the Dutch in Persia and the Gulf was not so much the purchase of silk as the sale of pepper and other spices.⁴² This trade was destined to play a key role in Dutch-Persian relations.

Thus, the first contacts between the new European naval powers and the Portuguese were based on freebooting and piracy, themselves extensions of Dutch-Iberian rivalry in Europe.⁴³ As a matter of course the Dutch expended far more energy against Portuguese elements of the Iberian Union than those of Spain,⁴⁴ and Portuguese concerns about the security of Hormuz were well-founded. Initially Dutch activities were limited to attacks on Portuguese shipping on the Omani coast near Dofar.⁴⁵ In 1609 there appeared a large Dutch fleet in the Arabian Sea. In 1614 a number of cargo

³⁷ M. Meilink-Roelofez, *Asian Trade and European influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, pp. 207-38; Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company*, p. 60.

³⁸ Meilink-Roelofez, *The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands*, p. 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company*, p. 60.

⁴¹ K. Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic Trade 1620-1700*, (Copenhagen, 1958), p. 112.

⁴² Falsafī, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1499.

⁴³ P. P. Shirodkar, 'Dutch-Portuguese Relations in the East (1580-1663)', *Studia*, 48 (1989), pp. 123-24.

⁴⁴ Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire* (London, 1965), pp. 25-26.

⁴⁵ L. Cordeiro, *Dois capitães da Índia* (Lisbon, 1898), p. 147.

vessels in Portuguese employment from Diu, Chaul, and Dabhul were seized near Aden.⁴⁶ In 1623 the VOC set up an establishment at Bandar Abbas at the Shah's invitation.⁴⁷ Outside the Gulf, moreover, between 1637 and 1663 the Dutch captured the principal settlements of the Portuguese in the Spice Islands, Java, and India.⁴⁸

Within a few years, then, the Portuguese found themselves confronted by foes of a different calibre to the ill-armed Asians they had hitherto dealt with. The Dutch and the English appeared in the East to dispute their maritime superiority, to oppose them as commercial rivals, and eventually, as time proved, to precipitate the collapse of their Eastern Empire. These European interlopers not only damaged the economic base of the Portuguese presence by breaking into trades formerly monopolised by them, but also conducted military operations against Portuguese establishments and shipping.

It is unnecessary here to describe in detail the conflict between these European powers in the East,⁴⁹ yet one must at least be aware that clashes in Asia made an important contribution to Portugal's waning position in the world at large. In the 1620s the relationship between the Gulf and the overall Portuguese system was perhaps at its most important; for in this period, more than any other, the Gulf was not merely a detail from a larger imperial canvass.

⁴⁶ C. G. Brouwer and A. Kaplanian, *Early Seventeenth Century Yemen*, (Leiden-New York, 1988), pp. 22-5.

⁴⁷ B. J. Slot, 'The Dutch East India Company and Bahrain', *Al-Watheeka*, 4, (1984), p. 252. There is no certain information about Dutch commerce in the Gulf at this time, though in December 1626 William Foster observed some Dutch ships with a cargo of goods in the factory of Bandar Abbas. See W. Foster, 'A view of Ormuz in 1627', *Geographical Journal*, no. 4, (London, 1894), p. 161.

⁴⁸ See Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, pp. 106-27; and Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, pp. 172-80.

⁴⁹ For good descriptions see Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*; Idem, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*; Shirodkar, 'Dutch-Portuguese Relations in the East (1580-1663)'; Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640*; Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*.

5. 2. The Fall of Hormuz in 1622

As has been demonstrated elsewhere in this thesis, the backdrop to early seventeenth-century European entanglements in the Portuguese Gulf was instability and increasing hostility from local peoples.⁵⁰ This situation made its own contribution to the fall of Hormuz, but it also interacted with English policy towards the Portuguese. As a consequence there are numerous points to be considered in order to properly understand Portugal's loss of Hormuz to an alliance of English and Persian forces.

One point at least seems clear. The security of Hormuz was badly, perhaps fatally, compromised when relations with Safavid Lār broke down in 1607-8 over the issue of the *muqarrariya* tribute payments.⁵¹ These *muqarrariyas* played such a profound role in relations between the Portuguese and the rulers of the Persian provinces on the eastern coast of the Gulf that they also affected the position of Hormuz. Thus, the fall of Hormuz was not sudden, but was the result of the accumulated mistakes of sixteenth-century diplomacy. Instead of coming to terms with the expansion of Persian trade, the Portuguese administration in Goa and in the Gulf contested it, compelling the Persians to buy commodities at fixed and inflated prices and to ship their wares on Portuguese vessels.⁵² These antagonistic and short-sighted actions brought the Persian nemesis upon them.

When Shah Abbas came to the throne in 1587 the Portuguese fortress of Hormuz was a thorn in his side. He spent most of his reign thinking about how to remove it. Though the war with the Turks occupied most of their resources, by the beginning of the seventeenth century the Persians had recaptured most of their territories.⁵³ Furthermore, after gaining a considerable victory over the Uzbek tribes in the north in

⁵⁰ See Chapter Three, section 2.

⁵¹ See Chapter Two, section 1.

⁵² See Chapter Two, section 1; S. Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. x., pp. 334-35.

⁵³ Samnani, *Shah Abbas Kabir*, p. 111.

1618, Shah Abbas assented to a peace treaty with the Ottomans.⁵⁴ This was regrettable for the Portuguese since the shah immediately turned his attention towards the south, and the Gulf. Quite simply, peace with his neighbours was the condition which allowed the Shah to focus solely on the Portuguese in the Gulf. Thereafter Shah Abbas made contact with the Arab tribes on the Persian coast and Lār, which gave the Persians useful support in the eastern arm of the Gulf. Presumably the Shah was also aware of the pressure that the Spanish were under in Europe, especially from the Dutch.⁵⁵ This conjunction of circumstances left Persia in a strong position to challenge the Portuguese in Hormuz and the Gulf.

One element of the Shah's strategy was to cultivate relations with the English. This was in complete contrast to the policy of his predecessor Tahmasp, and was a threat evidently perceived by the Spanish authorities. In 1613, for instance, Philip III warned the viceroy of India about Robert Sherley's mission to London, suggesting that he might have had authority to buy English support against Hormuz with privileges in Persian silk.⁵⁶

A second part of his strategy was to deploy Persian satellites against the kingdom of Hormuz. One such pawn was Qamber Beg, Khān of Lār. Qamber's pretext for action against Hormuz was the issue of unpaid *muqarrarīyas*, though in fact they had been suspended since Albuquerque's time.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the Khān did what he could to obstruct the trade of Hormuz. Differences also arose over the silk trade. The Persians, moreover, would not allow the Portuguese to have cattle or water from the mainland of Persia.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Jaffariyān, *Safwah as Duhwr ta Zawal 950–1135 H.D.*, p. 277.

⁵⁵ J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World 1606–1661* (Oxford, 1982), chapter II.

⁵⁶ Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. II, p. 208.

⁵⁷ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. x., p. 334.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Hormuz's logistical weaknesses were further exploited in 1607 when the Persians occupied two wells near Gombroon from which the island drew much of its water.⁵⁹ They also built two small fortifications near the old fortress. Following negotiations, the wells were returned to the Portuguese, but the defensive works that had been built close to the Portuguese mud fortress on the shore remained in place. As a consequence the Portuguese lost exclusive control over the coastal area opposite Hormuz:⁶⁰ they were thus deprived of their last foothold on the mainland in a climate of increasing Persian aggression. Significantly, in 1616, two years after the loss of Gombroon, Luís da Gama, the captain of Hormuz, advised Goa to bring water from Qishm and Larak (*Lareca*) islands to supply his command, giving full details about the advantages and disadvantages of both islands and their distance from Hormuz.⁶¹

These events were part of the gradual isolation of Hormuz. Most areas of the Gulf that had been subject to the kingdom came under the control of either the Persians or the Arabs, both of whom opposed the Portuguese. In addition, Hormuz, and the Portuguese by extension, lost the pearl banks of the western Gulf, which were not only a very considerable source of revenue, but also a means of keeping influence with the coastal Arab tribes through the provision of diving licenses.⁶²

Notionally, however, diplomatic channels between the Persians and the Spanish-Portuguese Union remained open, despite the growing rift. In 1604, for instance, the ambassador, Lacerda, who accompanied Allah Verdi Beg when he returned back from Goa to the Persian court, counselled that the silk *caffilas* should come from Persia direct to Hormuz. He also warned the Shah not to contact other European nations.⁶³ Such

⁵⁹ Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. II, p. 205.

⁶⁰ Abbas, *Mutalate Der Bab Bahrain Wa Jazair Khaleej Fars*, pp. 79-81; C. Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xxi.

⁶¹ The attack on Gombroon left the population and garrison of Hormuz without fresh water. See *Livro das Monções*, tomo III, pp. 360-62.

⁶² Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, p. 98.

⁶³ Gouvea, *Relaçam*, Liv. I, f. 66; *Livro das Monções*, tomo I, doc. 3, pp. 11-2.

'advice' from a religious envoy sent to deal with the Shah smacks of arrogance: the Portuguese still behaved as if they were the masters of the Gulf, issuing directives to be followed by their neighbours. Perhaps the Spanish crown still supposed that the Shah needed its support against the Ottomans, and for the moment this might have been true. The Shah's attitude to Spain's delegations certainly suggests this. On the other hand, in 1606 Shah Abbas made a point of reminding Spain's special envoy, Diogo de Santa Anna,⁶⁴ that he had won his victories against the Ottomans with his army and without the help of Christian rulers.⁶⁵

Yet it is interesting that diplomatic ties, however slender, survived until the very eve of Persia's assault on Hormuz. Having received no news of Anthony Sherley's embassy to Europe since 1599,⁶⁶ in 1608 Abbas dispatched the Englishman's brother Robert to make a pact with Philip III against the Turks, but the proposal was not well received.⁶⁷ In 1616 Sherley was sent on a second mission to Madrid with the object of concluding a treaty by which the whole monopoly of the silk trade would be given to Spain in return for suitable payment via the Portuguese.⁶⁸ The Spanish too tried on several occasions to patch up relations with Persia for the sake of Hormuz. In 1618, while Robert Sherley was still in Madrid, Philip sent an embassy to the Persian court at Qazvīn which was outwardly successful.⁶⁹ Shah Abbas gave a favourable reception to a modified Spanish proposal that the silk monopoly be granted to the Portuguese.⁷⁰ Yet this accomplishment was superficial. In reality Hormuz remained the Shah's chief priority – it was only his pause for a suitable moment that delayed an assault on the

⁶⁴ He was sent by the Archbishop of Goa, Frei Aleixo de Menezes, who was also the functioning governor. See Appendix I, no. 2.

⁶⁵ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 248.

⁶⁶ D. Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (London, 1933), p. 22.

⁶⁷ D. W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant*, pp. 228-30; Falsafī, *Zendaḡanē Shah `Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1578.

⁶⁸ Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 132.

⁶⁹ *Livro das Monções*, tomo IV, pp. 284-85.

⁷⁰ Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. III, pp. 32-3.

island. This moment came in March 1619 when Philip III explained the terms of the Persian silk agreement to the captain of Hormuz. The actual implementation of the agreement was to be made entirely dependent upon the restoration of Bahrain and Gombroon by the Shah to the king of Hormuz.⁷¹ Yet, in this matter Philip was dreaming: negotiations between the Spanish and the Persians failed and the agreement never became operative. Quite simply – and irrespective of Persia’s thinly veiled intentions towards Hormuz – the Spanish king was too extreme in his demands. Philip seems to have assumed the right of monopoly over all Asian trade, and was angered that Persia permitted the EIC to establish their factory at Jask.⁷² When the Spanish envoy Figueroa demanded the restoration of Bahrain and Gombroon in his final interview with the Shah at Isfahan in 1619, the latter used the occasion, in front of an audience of foreign ambassadors, to declare his intention of driving the Portuguese from their fortress at Hormuz.⁷³ At the same time he ordered a *farmān* to be made out, granting the sole trade in silks by sea to the English. Figueroa immediately left the Persian court for Hormuz, from where he embarked for Goa in April 1620.⁷⁴

The timing of the Shah’s open break with the Spanish-Portuguese Union is intriguing. Perhaps, on the one hand, Abbas felt that his forces were now up to the task of dislodging the Portuguese. More important, though, was his need for naval support. The occupation of Lār in 1602 and Gombroon in 1615 brought the Persians within striking distance of Hormuz island,⁷⁵ but they still needed the assistance of a naval power strong enough to challenge the Portuguese at sea. Once both pieces were in place Hormuz would surely fall. Even then, however, Abbas shrewdly assessed the outcome

⁷¹ *Livro das Monções* tomo XI, pp. 126-27, tomo XII, pp. 140-50.

⁷² Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. III, pp. 31-4.

⁷³ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. II, pp. 238-39; Abbas, *Mutalate Der Bab Bahrain Wa Jazair Khaeej Fars*, p. 86.

⁷⁴ G. S. Figueroa, *Comentarios de Garcia de Silva y Figueroa* (Madrid, 1903), tomo II, pp. 582-83.

⁷⁵ See Chapter Three, above, and *EI*, New ed., vol. IV, pp. 665-76.

of the conflict between the Portuguese and the English in the Gulf before making his final decision. This was noted by the Italian traveller Pietro Valle: 'I am in no doubt that the question of peace or war between the Portuguese and the Persians greatly depends on what happens between the Portuguese and the English.'⁷⁶

The English and the Dutch played a further, indirect, role in shaping the Shah's policy. The 'Treaty of Defence' of 1619 briefly united England with the Dutch Republic in war against the Portuguese, in which the assault on Hormuz was the EIC's most remarkable action.⁷⁷ Their predatory activities in the Gulf and elsewhere divided Portugal's forces and weakened their capacity to resist. In fact it is fair to say that the Portuguese did not have the means to pay much heed to their problems in the Gulf. Most of their military efforts were directed towards the defence of their eastern Asian interests against Dutch attack.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Spanish-Dutch war in Europe resumed in 1621.⁷⁹ In the early seventeenth century the kingdom of Hormuz shrank under the pressure of Persian and Arab attacks, as we have seen.⁸⁰ Yet despite these reverses Hormuz was still a considerable economic power in the Gulf. Both its trade and *alfândega* revenue were growing during the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the first two decades of the seventeenth century which gave Shah Abbas more impetus to conquer the island.⁸¹

None of the foregoing discussion of Persia's diplomatic and military preparations is intended to give the impression that the fate of Portuguese Hormuz was entirely out of its own hands. We can also observe the slowness of the Portuguese to respond seriously to the danger. This can be attributed to the inexperience of the

⁷⁶ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. II, pp. 194 -95.

⁷⁷ See Quinn and Ryan, *England's Sea Empire, 1550-1642*, pp. 160-3; and J. C. Appleby, 'War, politics and colonisation', pp. 75-7.

⁷⁸ Gastra, 'War, Competition and Collaboration', pp. 51-2.

⁷⁹ J. I. Israel, *Conflicts of Empires* (London, 1997), pp. 23-45.

⁸⁰ See Chapter Four, section 3.

⁸¹ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. x., p. 335.

Portuguese administration there.⁸² Along with their colleagues in Goa, they were hesitant in beginning an open conflict with Persia.⁸³ As a result, all of those who held grudges against Hormuz, from the inland tribes of the Arabian Peninsula to the southern coast in Oman, rose up against the kingdom in the region between Julfar and Shuar.⁸⁴ Moreover, there were serious troubles around Suhar between 1615 and 1616 because the town was contested by several elements of the Al-Nabhan tribe.⁸⁵

The hard fact was that the land between Julfar and Shuar on the western coast of the Gulf was the only area that remained to the king of Hormuz in this period. Although the king, Mohammed Shah V, asked the Portuguese captain there on several occasions to supply troops to defend the area, it was impossible for him to do so because there were insufficient men, and a modest naval force that numbered three small ships and one galley without rowers or equipment.⁸⁶ Thus, Portugal's recurrent logistical problems played a part in the erosion of Hormuz's authority. Having prohibited the king from maintaining his own forces,⁸⁷ the Portuguese alone were physically incapable of securing both their own interests and those of the kingdom of Hormuz.

Matters were not helped by continuing Portuguese neglect of local support. Even in the early seventeenth century there were potential allies to be found, including Arab tribes on the east coast of the Gulf which opposed the westward expansion of the Persian state. One such group was led by a chieftain from Nakhelu called Ali Kamal. According to Falsafi, Kamal left the Persian coast with his followers because of problems with the Persian court. He established a base near Julfar and offered himself

⁸² See Chapter Three, section 1.

⁸³ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xxii.

⁸⁴ Figueroa, *Comentarios de Garcia de Silva y Figueroa*, tomo II, pp. 383-84.

⁸⁵ For this see C. Boxer, 'New light on the Relations between the Portuguese and the Omani, 1613-1633', pp. 32-3.

⁸⁶ Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, pp. 102-03

⁸⁷ See above, pp. 146-7.

as an ally to Hormuz, promising to serve the Spanish in the defence of their kingdom.⁸⁸ In return Kamal asked for money to recruit members of his tribe from Nakhelu and to buy their loyalty.⁸⁹ However, neither the king nor the captain of Hormuz did anything to exploit this opportunity: Kamal could have been very useful in mustering a great number of Arabs opposed to the Persians.⁹⁰ Instead, in 1620, the Persians were allowed to neutralize the threat posed by Kamal and his small force.⁹¹ The Persians, in contrast, were quick to enlist Arab support, much of it already alienated from the violence and caprice of Portuguese rule.⁹² A practical example came with the occupation of Lār at the beginning of the seventeenth century, after which Imám Quli Khān allied himself with several coastal tribes who supported small-scale maritime attacks on the Portuguese.⁹³

However, even accepting the importance of Persian intrigue and Portuguese frailty, the fact remains that the English played a pivotal role in the fall of Hormuz in 1622. The Portuguese continued to have misgivings about their arrival in Persia and their Jask factory. Portuguese documents indicate alarm by 1614 at the latest, when Jorge de Castel Branco, the captain of Hormuz, advised Jerónimo de Azevedo in Goa of the first contacts between the English and the Persians (*muito que os ingleses procuram a amisade do rey da Persia*).⁹⁴ Other warnings about the English and their ambitions presumably arose from Robert Sherley's agreements with the Persian Shah.⁹⁵ Concern escalated as the EIC deepened its involvement in Persian trade, with the Shah's evident

⁸⁸ Falsafī, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1553.

⁸⁹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, pp. 217, 303.

⁹⁰ L. Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, (Lisbon, 1896), p. 67.

⁹¹ Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, pp. 103-5.

⁹² Falsafī, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1553. The most important of the Arab tribes on the Persian coast were resident in Bushahr and Bander Rig. Shah Abbas had more power over the Arab coastal tribes of Bushahr and Bander Rig than in any other area on the Persian coast. See Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, p. 63.

⁹³ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 181.

⁹⁴ *Livro das Monções*, tomo II, p. 469.

⁹⁵ Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. II, pp. 273, 386-87, vol. III, pp. 6-7.

encouragement. The Portuguese noticed that their ability to channel and tax seaborne commerce in the Gulf was coming to an end.⁹⁶

In 1619 Philip III took measures to preserve Iberian supremacy in the Gulf. Two naval squadrons were sent to the region – one from Goa commanded by Francisco de Lima with four *naus*, and another from Lisbon under Ruy Freire de Andrade – with clear orders to drive off the English and secure Hormuz against a possible Persian attack.⁹⁷ The force placed under Ruy Freire consisted of two galleons and three small vessels (*urcas*), carrying a total of 178 guns and more than 2,000 men.⁹⁸ Freire reached Hormuz in June 1620.⁹⁹ His arrival did not go unnoticed. A report from the factors at Jask observed that ‘the Portugals are grown great men, and begin to look big’.¹⁰⁰ In the following November Freire sailed to Jask to intercept the English ships which were expected to arrive there in December with the annual cargo of goods for Persia. He met two ships of the EIC, the *Hart* and the *Eagle*, both of which escaped to Surat.¹⁰¹

As late as December 1620 Shah Abbas tried to reassure the Portuguese about his dealings with the English,¹⁰² but the Portuguese authorities in Goa realised that ‘the English would not tamely abandon the trade they had successfully begun’.¹⁰³ This was confirmed on 7 January 1621 when fighting broke out at the Cape of Jask between Ruy Freire’s squadron and an English fleet of four vessels.¹⁰⁴ The wind ran against the

⁹⁶ *Livro das Monções*, tomo IV, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁷ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, p. 17; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 71.

⁹⁸ Cordeiro, *Dios Capitãs da Índia*, p. 18; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, pp. 76-77.

⁹⁹ Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 113.

¹⁰⁰ *Calendar of State Papers, colonial series East India, 1617-1621* (London, 1860), p. 379.

¹⁰¹ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 28-9; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 118.

¹⁰² Falsafi, *Zendağané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1536.

¹⁰³ Boxer, *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia 1500-1750*, (London, 1985), p. 58.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-24.

Portuguese and the English had the better of the skirmish.¹⁰⁵ This engagement is important for several reasons. It was the first military confrontation in the Gulf between two European powers. It demonstrated that Portuguese vessels were less weatherly than those of their northern rivals.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps most importantly it served as a litmus test of European strength in the Gulf. It was a timely illustration for the Persians of the changing balance of power in the region, even if this balance had already been shifting for some years. It had been reported in 1596 that the armadas did not patrol as frequently as they should have done out of fear of Dutch and English ships, and because of being poorly equipped.¹⁰⁷

After the reverse at Jask, Freire turned his attention to the second objective that he had been set by the king, namely securing Hormuz from Persian invasion. In this respect his brief included the construction of a fortress on the island of Qishm,¹⁰⁸ presumably to protect the wells that were situated there for supplying water to Hormuz.¹⁰⁹ This project was carried out at an unfortunate moment: the fortification of the island provided an excuse for Shah Abbas to start a war with the Portuguese. Such an obvious counter to Persian ambitions in the region was sufficient provocation. The Shah, through his envoy, protested against this operation to the Portuguese administration at Hormuz: 'the Portuguese and the English, both, they should solve their problems out of our sea boundaries'.¹¹⁰ In any case, in the event of war with Persia it would be of little use to have a fort dominating the wells at Qishm when the Portuguese would not be able to transport water from there to Hormuz. These points were made to

¹⁰⁵ W. Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623* (Oxford, 1908), pp. 223-24; Birdwood, *Report on the Old Records of the India Office*, p. 212; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 125.

¹⁰⁶ See Cogs, *Caravels and Galleons: the Sailing Ship 1000-1650*, ed. R. Gardiner (London, 1994), pp. 107-13 for the Spanish ship types during the reign of Philip III (1598-1621).

¹⁰⁷ ANTT, C C, Part I, maç. 113, no 87.

¹⁰⁸ Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 114.

¹⁰⁹ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 334.

¹¹⁰ Falsafī, *Zendaḡané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1539.

Ruy Freire, either by Fernao de Albuquerque, the governor of India, or by Luíz de Sousa, the captain of Hormuz.¹¹¹ The king of Hormuz, however, was of a different opinion. Mohammed Shah still retained his dream of restoring the old kingdom. He considered that all the coasts of Persia were legally under his authority, not only Qishm, and he therefore agreed with Freire's more aggressive stance.¹¹² In the end Freire ignored the warnings of his colleagues and insisted on fortifying Qishm.¹¹³ This was his first big mistake. It seems that the 'hot-headed' commander, as Boxer described him, would not listen to reason and pursue the English at sea.¹¹⁴ The outcome of the engagement at Jask had planted the seeds of doubt in Freire's mind about Portugal's maritime supremacy in the Gulf. A second failure would damage his aristocratic pride and endanger his command.

Having chosen his path, in May 1621 Ruy Freire commenced construction work at Qishm. Following their failure to oppose the Portuguese disembarkation,¹¹⁵ the Persians were easily reinforced from the mainland with the support of four hundred Arab boats which were assembled on the Persian coastline,¹¹⁶ and the Portuguese and Hormuzians found themselves closely besieged by about 25,000 men led by Abdullah Hussain Khān. He was sent by Imām Quli Khān, who had been placed in charge of the campaign by Shah Abbas.¹¹⁷ While Freire was working on the fortress, two galleons came from Goa to his assistance commanded by Manuel de Azevedo and John de

¹¹¹ *Livro das Monções* tomo XII, p. 95. For more details about this argument see Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 47-52.

¹¹² Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 34.

¹¹³ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 47-8; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, pp. 114, 160.

¹¹⁴ *Livro das Monções* tomo XII, p. 95.

¹¹⁵ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 60-70; *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, pp. 165-66.

¹¹⁶ See below p. 237, n. 166.

¹¹⁷ Purchas *His Pilgrims*, vol. X, p. 333-34; Falsafī, *Zendaġané Shah `Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1538-39; Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 60-1; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 167.

Silveira, who were, as Sousa noted, enemies of Freire; they were 'ill manned, and scarce of ammunitions, and brought instructions that curbed the power of the admiral'.¹¹⁸ Later, at crisis point, these captains deserted Freire and returned to Goa.¹¹⁹

Some of the most serious instances of Portuguese atrocities and violence in the Gulf occurred under Ruy Freire's command, giving rise to anger among the coastal tribes on both the Persian and Arabian shores. Freire burnt and sacked nearly all the ports and villages between Kung and Jask, and others in Julfar.¹²⁰ These ravages were carried out at an inauspicious time for the Portuguese. It would have been preferable to adopt diplomatic means to deal with the people, because the Portuguese needed assistance from the Gulf's inhabitants. Freire, however, believed that he could preempt an assault on Hormuz by destroying local shipping, thus preventing the Khān of Shiraz from collecting a sufficient number of craft to transport his force over to Hormuz. He might also impede the passage of reinforcements from the mainland to Qishm, and stifle the pearl fisheries.¹²¹ In this he was wrong. As Boxer points out, this inhumane behaviour only served to render the wretched inhabitants more bitter towards the Portuguese than before.¹²²

The Persians besieged Qishm for about nine months, from June 1621 until February 1622. They took many casualties in their numerous assaults on the fortress, and all their efforts to take it proved vain. There seems to have been a realisation among the Persian commanders that the stronghold would not fall unless they controlled the surrounding sea lanes. Accordingly they decided to put pressure on the English to assist

¹¹⁸ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 303.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹²⁰ See Chapter Three, section 3; Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 167-68; Boxer, 'New light on the relations between the Portuguese and the Omani, 1613-1633', p. 37. Ruy Freire attacked Kung, Kuhistak, Saramiyen, Lafet, Jask, and Julfar.

¹²¹ For more details of these events on the Persian coast see Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 71-88; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 62-73.

¹²² Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xxix.

them in their operations against the Portuguese.¹²³ At the same time, in November 1621, discussions took place between James I and the council of the EIC at Surat with a view to acting against the Portuguese in the Gulf, not only defensively but also offensively. These deliberations did not produce a plan to capture Hormuz.¹²⁴ Therefore, when nine English vessels arrived at Jask from Surat on 26 December 1621, Imām Quli Khān used the opportunity to exert pressure on the English.¹²⁵ He asked, surely by order of the Shah, the commanders of the fleet for assistance against the Portuguese, holding out promises of reward, but also threatening the withdrawal of the Company's trading privileges in Persia and the confiscation of the silk that was then in transit.¹²⁶ The Company was aware that the conflict between the Persians and the Portuguese had been brought to a head by the favours that had been granted to them, and if they refused to give assistance to the Persians it would mean the loss of the silk trade.¹²⁷ In addition, it should be noted that Ruy Freire ordered his naval forces to destroy Jask while he was fighting the Persians in Qishm, as he thought this would not only harm the Persians but also sever English trade with Persia. This attack on Jask succeeded and Portuguese and Hormuzian forces plundered the town and the English factory.¹²⁸ However, this proved to be Freire's second mistake. It served to intensify English hostility to the Portuguese and ultimately to broaden out the conflict in the Gulf. The destruction of Jask also demonstrates that the war between the Portuguese and their enemies was mainly an economic struggle to control the Gulf's trade routes. As Cordeiro points out, Kung and Jask were destroyed by Freire so that the English would not be able to come back to

¹²³ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 329; Boxer, *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in South Asia, 1500-1750*, p. 72.

¹²⁴ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., pp. 329-30, 342.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

¹²⁶ Falsafī, *Zendaḡané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1541; Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, pp. 31-2.

¹²⁷ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 329; Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 144.

¹²⁸ Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Maritima da Índia*, vol. III, p. 168; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 76.

these ports to receive the silks that would be brought by *caffilas* in the monsoon season.¹²⁹

In light of all this, and owing to the efforts of Edward Monox, the Company's agent in Persia, the English decided to accept the Shah's 'request'.¹³⁰ The curtailment of Portuguese influence would bring certain advantages, and the English probably derived sufficient encouragement from the outcome of the first battle in 1621 to be confident in taking on the Portuguese once again. An agreement was drawn up on 9 January with Imám Quli Khān in Kuhistak.¹³¹ The two parties agreed to the conduct of combined operations against the Portuguese by land and sea on the general basis that: the fortress of Hormuz would be given to the English on its capture; the spoils and the future customs of Hormuz would be equally divided; English trade at Hormuz would be forever duty-free; any Christian captives were to be at the disposal of the English and the Muslims at that of the Persians; and the Persians were to pay half the expenses of the English fleet during its operations. The Khān accepted all but the surrender of the castle, which he suggested should be jointly occupied until the Shah decided its long-term future.¹³² The agreement between the two sides was not a national treaty and so it did not outlive the immediate purpose of its signature.

The English joined the siege of Qishm in the last week of January 1622.¹³³ Negotiations were held between Monox and Freire. Freire reminded Monox that he was

¹²⁹ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, p. 86.

¹³⁰ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. 32.

¹³¹ Kuhistak or Costack, a port forty miles south of Minab. See P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, pp. 191-92. See Map VI.

¹³² See Monox's MS 'History at large of the taking of Ormuz Castle', in Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, Appendix X, pp. 256-57; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 343-45; Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, see Appendix 'Sexto Documento', pp. 295-96. Pietro Valle observed here that the English, because of their ignorance of Persian, had been hoodwinked by Quli Khān. The Khān had promised them half of the fortress of Hormuz, but when they had the *farmān* translated after the fall of Hormuz, they discovered that it was the town, not the fortress, they had obtained half of. See *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. II, pp. 515-16.

¹³³ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 345. Simão de Mello, who was in Muscat in July 1622, wrote that the English fleet which besieged Qishm comprised seven *naus* and two *patachos*, and they arrived on 30 January. Over the next day arrived 150 *terradas* and two *navios* with *muito gente* from Persia. See Cordeiro, *Dios Capitães da Índia*, pp. 36-7.

giving his assistance to ‘Moores’ against Christian forces. Monox countered that he came not ‘to treat of busynisses of such antequitye, but to treat of satisfaxione and revenge for the warrs begun and attempted by himselfe, Rufrero, against our fleete in Jasques, to the losse of a very worthy commander’.¹³⁴ These talks brought no resolution: Freire refused to surrender, and the fortress was bombarded with little effect.¹³⁵ Ultimately the garrison rebelled against their commander, seemingly at the instigation of their priests, and surrendered the fort to the English.¹³⁶ In February 1622 Freire was sent with his men to Surat, from where he escaped to Muscat.¹³⁷ The hapless *Lascarin* auxiliaries were not so fortunate. A savage revenge was exacted against them by the Persians: having first promised mercy, the Khān had them massacred like a flock of sheep. In fact both sides, the English and the Persians, violated the terms of surrender.¹³⁸

The fall of Qishm to the English-Persian alliance was crucially important because of its role as a major supplier of agricultural products to feed Hormuz. In addition, its fall was the first step precipitating a crisis in Hormuz because it deprived the garrison and inhabitants of Hormuz of one of their sources of water.¹³⁹ Thus, when Qishm was besieged, there was more than melodrama in Simão de Mello’s exclamation that ‘Hormuz is lost’.¹⁴⁰ In addition, the loss of Ruy Freire was a serious blow. It seems that de Mello – the new commander – did not have the spirit or the gift of leadership required by his predicament.

¹³⁴ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 343; Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, letter of February 7, 1622, p. 33.

¹³⁵ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. 34.

¹³⁶ Cordeiro, *Dios Capitães da Índia*, pp. 42-4.

¹³⁷ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, pp. 34-5; Figueroa, *Comentarios de Garcia de Silva y Figueroa*, tomo II, p. 468; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 333.

¹³⁸ They were about 800 *Lascarins*. See Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, pp. 34-5; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 343; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. xxxv, 109; Falsafi, *Zendağané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1547.

¹³⁹ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 333. See Chapter Two for more details.

¹⁴⁰ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 116.

On receiving news of the fall of Qishm and the siege of Hormuz, in March 1622 Fernão de Albuquerque sent a relief squadron from Goa composed of seventeen light vessels commanded by Constantino de Sá Noronha. Noronha, however, was poorly qualified for the task.¹⁴¹ He showed little urgency, in spite of the situation's gravity. When his fleet was scattered by a storm shortly after leaving Goa at the beginning of April, he anchored at Muscat where he was joined by Ruy Freire, who was intent upon returning to Hormuz to retrieve his reputation.¹⁴² In the meantime de Mello, thinking that the enemy would be satisfied with Qishm, began the futile task of brokering peace with the Persians, but without any success.¹⁴³ Moreover, relations within Hormuz remained tense. Mohammed Shah berated de Mello because of his inaction over Qishm.¹⁴⁴

The campaign progressed to Hormuz on 9 February 1622 with the arrival of an expedition comprising six English ships and about two hundred boats carrying 3,000 Persian troops commanded by Imám Quli Khān.¹⁴⁵ In the agreement between the allies it was arranged that the Persians would attack from the side of the city, while the English bombarded the fortress from their vessels and artillery positions they had constructed on land.¹⁴⁶ The English contribution to the assault was significant. They destroyed the Portuguese fleet at Hormuz, ship by ship, tightening the siege and blocking the arrival of aid from Goa.¹⁴⁷ Allied troops drove the Portuguese into Hormuz

¹⁴¹ Other commanders of limited capacity included Manuel de Azevedo, João de Silveyra, Simão de Mello. See Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, pp. 303-04, 308.

¹⁴² *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. II, p. 397; Falsafi, *Zendaḡané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, pp. 1547-48.

¹⁴³ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 309.

¹⁴⁴ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 105-06.

¹⁴⁵ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, pp. 76, 151; Sousa stated that 12,000 Persians came over in their *Barques*. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 309; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 346. A full account of the siege of Hormuz can be found in L. Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 173-281; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 116-70.

¹⁴⁶ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, pp. xi, 76.

¹⁴⁷ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 331.

fortress, the city's main defence, and the Persians began to entrench themselves outside its walls.¹⁴⁸ In fact the fortress was already weakened through lack of military supplies. The Portuguese knew their days were numbered. Given the blockade by sea no relief could be expected from Goa or elsewhere, and for this reason the garrison did not defend Hormuz with much tenacity.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, as Sousa mentions, treason played a part in the fall of Hormuz. In agreement with other members of the garrison who were not willing to make a final stand, Luís de Brito was let down from the wall by a rope and concluded articles of surrender with the English. De Mello opposed this, but his troops refused to fight on without water, food, and gunpowder.¹⁵⁰ In a final throw of the dice de Mello tried to buy off the Persians but their demands were extortionate.¹⁵¹

The siege of Hormuz ended in early May 1622 when a final agreement was made between the belligerents.¹⁵² The English and the Khān of Shiraz entered the fortress as victors on 3 May.¹⁵³ Sousa gives a sense of the occasion's tragedy: the Portuguese 'were leaving a great treasure, and the honour of their country, in the enemies' hands'.¹⁵⁴ The last king of Hormuz, Mohammed Shah IV, was held by Imām Qulī Khān under Shah Abbas's orders that he should be brought to Isfahan.¹⁵⁵ The terms

¹⁴⁸ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., p. 330.

¹⁴⁹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 107.

¹⁵⁰ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, pp. 309-10.

¹⁵¹ The Persians demanded 500,000 *tumān* in cash, and an annual tribute of 200,000 *tumān*. K. Bayani, *Tarekh Nezami Iran*, (Tehran, 1335 S.), p. 522.

¹⁵² Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 310; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 83; Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. xi.

¹⁵³ Cordeiro, *Dios Capitães da Índia*, p. 42; Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 310.

¹⁵⁴ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 310.

¹⁵⁵ Shah Abbas, to humiliate the king, not only refused to see him but even ordered the king to be placed in an iron cage, where he was sustained by the alms of those who passed by. In 1625, a report from the EIC mentioned that the king of Hormuz was in Shiraz, where the Khān allowed him a *tumān* a day for his cost of living. See Foster, *The English Factories in India*, 1624-29, p. 85; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 172-73.

of surrender allowed the captain, soldiers, and more than 2,000 Portuguese to depart for Muscat with their goods and weapons.¹⁵⁶

In 1622 when the Portuguese lost the island Simão de Mello said ‘Oh, Sir captain! After the accounts of what happened, we have grievance to God and to his Majesty as a result of the total destruction of the fortress of Hormuz. We needed lions to defend it’.¹⁵⁷ In contrast, the king had stood up in the council of Hormuz before the fall and exclaimed, ‘Gentlemen, Hormuz is lost, since so weak and cowardly a captain has come to govern it’.¹⁵⁸

Finally, perhaps, we have reached the truth of the Portuguese in the Gulf; they gained the region, and in particular Hormuz, as warriors but they lost it as merchants.

We cannot pass over this event without trying to answer the main question that it prompts, namely why Hormuz fell faster than expected. What were its deficiencies? Was it just in the fabric of the fortress? Or was it in the structure of the Portuguese administration and its men?

Conflict had been almost inevitable ever since the Persians claimed the coastline of the Gulf. Open warfare was triggered by the arrival, and apparent aptitude, of the English. Until 1619 the possibility of settlement instead of war had been kept alive by the respective embassies of Robert Sherley and Figueroa.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Spanish claims for the security of Hormuz, including its mainland supply and watering places,

¹⁵⁶ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, pp. 149-50; Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. II, pp. 211-12.

¹⁵⁷ *GEP* vol. 19, p. 640. In Portuguese: ‘Ah, senhor capitão! que conta há-de dar a Deus e a Sua Majestade da perdição das suas fortress, tendo leões que lhas defendiam’.

¹⁵⁸ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 106, 116.

¹⁵⁹ *Livro das Monções*, tomo IV, pp. 153-54.

were incompatible with the Shah's idea of sovereignty over the coast. Hormuz could not live and maintain its 40,000 inhabitants without supplies from the mainland.¹⁶⁰

In discussing the military reasons for the fall of Hormuz, we should not be content with emphasising the poor morale and organisation of the Portuguese garrison. Even the English commanders faced considerable difficulty in getting their men to participate in the campaign because it was 'no merchandizing business'.¹⁶¹ Only by means of threats and coercion were they induced to take part in the operations against Qishm and Hormuz.¹⁶² However, this is not to say that military factors – however old fashioned and unsophisticated they may seem – were unimportant. English heavy artillery and the skills of its crews did terrible damage to the fortresses at both Qishm and Hormuz.¹⁶³ Moreover, the disproportion between the respective fleets can only be accounted for by the extraordinarily poor gunnery of the Portuguese because, as Boxer observed, they did not lack courage.¹⁶⁴ Another significant tactical factor was the Persian mining of both fortresses. They mined to such good effect that the tower of Santiago, the main bastion of the fortress of Hormuz, was blown up. This work with mines continued from the end of March until the end of April 1622.¹⁶⁵

Regarding the performance of the Portuguese administration, it may be observed that the military planning of captains such as Ruy Freire and Simão de Mello was poor. The tactics of the attackers were clear and successful, and benefited from additional help from the Arab tribes on the Persian coast.¹⁶⁶ We know that English fleet was there,

¹⁶⁰ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, p. 303.

¹⁶¹ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. ix.

¹⁶² Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xxxii.

¹⁶³ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825*, p. 111; Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. xi; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., pp. 338-41.

¹⁶⁴ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. ix; Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. xxvi, xxxvii- xxxix.

¹⁶⁵ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., pp. 353-55; Cordeiro, *Dios Capitães da Índia*, p. 42.

¹⁶⁶ These Arabs succeeded in hiding about 400 boats from Ruy Freire. For more details of these events and the English-Persian alliance in the fall of Hormuz see Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 125-54; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X., pp. 331, 335-36, 339-41.

but it could not transport between 3,000 and 12,000 Persians from the mainland, and from Qishm to Hormuz. Only the *terradas* of the Arabs could accomplish this task. In contrast, so far as Hormuz was concerned there were no effective measures taken to protect the city and fortress. One might ask if the outcome at Hormuz would have been different if its captain had followed the advice of Albuquerque, which was also subscribed to by its king: 'If you see European ships anchor off this bar, flood the moat, and sleep in peace'.¹⁶⁷ However, there were real and substantive differences between the king and the captain, together with other Portuguese officers, about how best to organise the defence. Mohammed Shah's criticisms were numerous:

'If we are to defend ourselves, why has not the moat, which is at present choked up at the foot of the bulwark-of Santiago- been cleared? In addition, why not send to collect the vast supplies of wood which are in the magazines of the *alfândega*, factory, hospital, and other houses? Why are the fortifications which the captain Francisco de Sousa began, still unfinished? Moreover, why are not the supplies and other provisions collected, of which the shops of the merchants are full enough to last many men for ten years? And likewise why not fill the cisterns of the king with the vast amount of water with which all the houses of this city are provided; for all of which we have men enough, and let us not leave all this to the enemy, whose entry we cannot stop, since no fortification has been made in the streets and city; and if what ought to be done was going to be left undone'.¹⁶⁸

Several important issues arise from this. Why was Hormuz so underprepared for an assault? Perhaps we should not forget that de Mello was appointed to his position in Hormuz only in January 1622. This, however, raises the additional question of why Hormuz was left without an experienced commander at such a time?

Mohammed Shah also disliked de Mello's passive deployment of the Portuguese squadron at Hormuz. The galleons had been withdrawn to close under the fortress, and their crews disembarked. The king counselled a more aggressive stance:¹⁶⁹ these vessels could wreak havoc among the 200 or so Persian *terradas* around the island of

¹⁶⁷ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 113.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁶⁹ Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, vol. X, pp. 365-67.

Hormuz.¹⁷⁰ Though Mohammed Shah also wondered why the most powerful and heavily-gunned galleons were still in India, he nonetheless thought that the existing vessels could successfully oppose the English forces at sea – losses sustained in any engagement were preferable to allowing the enemy an unopposed entry into Hormuz. De Mello, as the *Commentaries* note, carried out some of what the king asked; but the waters around Hormuz were left uncontested.¹⁷¹ Typically, the weather also played a part in isolating Hormuz from relief. By the time Manuel de Sousa reached Goa from Hormuz with the son of the king and messages for the viceroy, the sailing season was over and no assistance could be sent.¹⁷² Again, the monsoon system exerted its considerable influence over the exercise of naval power.

Arguably, however, the damage had been done long before Portugal's enemies appeared off Hormuz in 1622. Early warnings were issued by the newly appointed *ouvidor* of Hormuz, Francesco de Gouvea, in 1608, who brought attention to the weakness of the fortress and deficiency of the cisterns. He reported to his king that the Persians were so close at hand that they could be before the fortress walls within an hour.¹⁷³ In addition, a letter of January 1612 from Lisbon to the governor of India contained advice which officials failed to heed. The letter's importance lies in its description of the condition of the fortress at Hormuz: it 'lacks artillery, and that which it has is so old and lacking in metal and if the occasion were to arise, there is no piece that could fire for two days at a stretch'.¹⁷⁴ In fairness the negligence was not ubiquitous. Captain Francisco de Sousa paid attention to some of the fortress's defects when faced with the threat of an English fleet bound for the Gulf.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, de

¹⁷⁰ Cordeiro, *Dios Capitães da Índia*, p. 37.

¹⁷¹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 114- 15.

¹⁷² See Introduction, section 4.

¹⁷³ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, p. 251.

¹⁷⁴ *Livro das Monções*, vol. II, p. 144.

¹⁷⁵ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, p. viii.

Sousa died at the end of summer 1621.¹⁷⁶ He was succeeded in January 1622 by de Mello,¹⁷⁷ who was not de Sousa's equal in reputation or experience, and who had not given a good account of himself as captain of Mombassa.¹⁷⁸ Crucially de Mello did not continue the renovations begun by his predecessor. Rather he restored the old feeling of false security. The people of Hormuz thought that 'a worthy and beloved leader was replaced by an indifferent stranger', and one who, moreover, antagonised Ruy Freire.¹⁷⁹ In this matter, one of the Portuguese captains commented that 'The truth of the matter is that we are lost through our sins and not by reason of the strength or power of the enemy'.¹⁸⁰ Boxer, in his analysis of the fall of Hormuz, blamed de Mello. He concluded that the loss of the fortress was chiefly due to his obstinacy in ignoring Mohammed Shah's exhortations to take action.¹⁸¹

If the tactical decisions of de Mello at Hormuz were questionable, we may also question the strategy of Ruy Freire which occasioned them. Given that the *Commentaries* were written to justify his actions in the Gulf during the Hormuz crisis, we must take a more critical look at Freire's role in the events that led to the fall of the island in 1622. His ability as a commander has already been questioned.¹⁸² Freire's strategy provoked the Persians and the English, and to make matters worse, prior to the fall of Hormuz his forces were exhausted in the fortification of Qishm and punitive raids along the Persian coast. More generally it seems that Freire relied too much on English neutrality in his quarrel with the Persians; his campaigns convey the impression

¹⁷⁶ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III. p. 299. De Sousa died, in fact, as a result of his labours in trying to strengthen the fortress which had been so neglected. On his passing some people in Hormuz said 'when the captain is dead, Hormuz is doomed'. Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 89.

¹⁷⁷ Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, 'Quinto Documento', p. 291.

¹⁷⁸ Bocarro, *Decada* 13, part I, pp. 242-43.

¹⁷⁹ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III. p. 303.

¹⁸⁰ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. 119.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. xliv.

¹⁸² See Chapter Three, section 3.

that he was operating in a world where the initiative would always remain in his hands. This might simply have been a symptom of Portuguese policy which, as Niels Steensgaard suggests, was too deeply engaged in the control of Gulf trade, with little regard for the international repercussions.¹⁸³ But Freire's actions also accord with Slot's hypothesis that the mentality of Portuguese noblemen, especially their arrogance and individualism, was not really suited to the maintenance of an empire consisting of small outposts with limited military means.¹⁸⁴

There are also other good reasons to doubt Freire's suitability for the role of regional commander. It seems he was very impetuous in his plans and was not a man who co-operated well with his colleagues, as evidenced by a story involving one of his most important officers.¹⁸⁵ In short Freire made enemies more than he found friendships in the Gulf. Garcia de Figueroa looked back to the loss of Gombroon in 1614 as evidence of strained relationships, and consequent inertia, within the Portuguese hierarchy. He observed that with Goa's full appreciation of the Persian threat, the viceroy Jerónimo de Azevedo had spent the monsoon of 1614 cruising off northern India to avoid an encounter with the English fleet.¹⁸⁶ Figueroa added that the independence of Ruy Freire was resented by the aged Albuquerque, who virtually ended it by appointing Simão de Mello to the captaincy of Hormuz.¹⁸⁷ Freire, by concentrating on one objective, had virtually lost his fleet, which should have been the main defence

¹⁸³ Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*, pp. 9-11, 412-14.

¹⁸⁴ Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, p. 109-10.

¹⁸⁵ See the details of this story in Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, pp. 38-46.

¹⁸⁶ Figueroa, *Comentarios de Garcia de Silva y Figueroa*, tomo II, p. 470.

¹⁸⁷ The youth of Ruy Freire caused him to make many mistakes, and that is what led Fernão de Albuquerque to write to him after he heard the news about Qishm: 'it had been just and right if you had considered my previous warnings, and not so confident of yourself, before putting hand to that work; for you with your thirty years had not been dreamt of in this world yet they tell me that you were fully persuaded you could correct what my seventy years wrote you, in so weighty and important a matter'. See this letter in Cordeiro, *Como se Perdeu Ormuz*, Appendix I, *Primeiro Documento*.

for Hormuz.¹⁸⁸ According to Figueroa, many warnings about Hormuz had been ignored in the past, and the Portuguese officials in Goa and Hormuz reacted too late to the danger facing the island. Eventually, when disaster struck, Fernão de Albuquerque dispatched a mere dozen open barques with about 447 men as late as 2 April 1622; and not a single vessel of that fleet got further than Muscat.¹⁸⁹

From the above discussion it seems that the main reason for the fall of Hormuz was the lack understanding between the Portuguese captains, as they reacted against each other with hostility. A spectacular example occurred during the siege of Qishm. Freire's continued resistance was based on the assumption that reinforcements would arrive from Hormuz. Eventually, de Mello sent Gonçalo de Silveyra to him, but with only one vessel carrying ammunition. Freire reiterated his need for assistance, to which de Mello, taking offence, responded with a letter to the governor in India in which he accused Freire of arrogance, ignorance and bullying.¹⁹⁰ Rather ironically it had been the hostility between Albuquerque and Freire that had led the governor to appoint de Mello as captain of Hormuz in the first place, much to Freire's disgust. It seems that Albuquerque was dissatisfied from the moment he received the king's order to appoint Freire to Hormuz and to oust the English from the Gulf by force. Perhaps because of this he neglected to deal with important events which occurred in the Gulf at that time.

There can be no doubt, then, that such petty rivalries exacerbated the physical and structural weaknesses of the Portuguese in the Gulf when they should have been united against their enemies. As Sousa concluded, 'This caused the ruin of Hormuz; if Freire had been there, Hormuz would never have been lost'.¹⁹¹ The rather unsatisfactory alternative is to believe English claims that Hormuz could not have held out in any case

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xlii.

¹⁹⁰ Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. III, pp. 308-09.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 308.

for more than a day or two longer, irrespective of whether its provisions were exhausted.

5.3. Postscript: After the Fall

The impact of the fall of Hormuz was not confined to the fortress itself; it brought the collapse of Portuguese strategy in the East – the end of the policy which had been set out by Albuquerque during the first Portuguese campaigns in Asia. The fall of Hormuz revealed the truth of Almeida's contention that there would be no benefit to the empire in fortresses.¹⁹² In the case of Hormuz, Albuquerque's suspicion of maritime supremacy was the island's undoing.¹⁹³ The loss of Hormuz, however, did not end Portugal's involvement in the Gulf – to use Curtin's terms, the trade diaspora of the Portuguese did not work itself out after 1622, but rather it evolved into a more competitive system without the impediments of 'empire'.¹⁹⁴

To be sure, with the fall of Hormuz the Portuguese lost one of the buttresses of their empire. Its loss snapped the chain of Portuguese fortresses along the East African and Asian seaboard at its strongest and richest link. Quite naturally, strenuous efforts were made to retake Hormuz in the ensuing years by Ruy Freire and others. However, nothing effective could be done to recapture the island in 1623, 1624 and 1630 through lack of men and munitions.¹⁹⁵ When Freire was on the verge of success in 1625, the arrival of an Anglo-Dutch naval force at Gombroon forced him to raise his siege.¹⁹⁶

Most commentators agree that the English did rather well out of the capture of Hormuz. Sizeable reparations to James I for 'piracy' against a friendly nation did not

¹⁹² See Chapter One, p. 77.

¹⁹³ For the Gulf in general in this period see R.J. Barendse, *The Arabian Seas: The Indian Ocean World of the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2002), especially chapters 2 and 7.

¹⁹⁴ P. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 3-4.

¹⁹⁵ *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. II, p. 397.

¹⁹⁶ Sykes, *A History of Persia*, pp. 192-93.

dent the East India Company's future prospects for trade with Persia.¹⁹⁷ Wilson suggested that it was difficult to discover what the Company gained from this action.¹⁹⁸ However, Boxer posits the opposite view. The fall of Hormuz meant freedom from customs dues and exceptional privileges in the Persian trade, moreover, without the threat of Portuguese vessels in the Gulf.¹⁹⁹

If, after 1622, the English saw in Hormuz a free port more convenient than Jask for the prosecution of their trade, Shah Abbas, in contrast, found only a potential rival to his own ports on the mainland. After the Persians had plundered everything movable, the Shah ordered the destruction of Hormuz. Some of its broken fabric was used to build a new port, Bandar Abbas, on the site of a formerly insignificant fishing village.²⁰⁰ In most respects Bandar Abbas succeeded Hormuz; the latter's population and trade were diverted there, and for a century and a half it served as the main trade centre of Persian silk and Bahraini pearls, and the principal foothold of the EIC in the Gulf. The Shah also granted the island of Kharg as an emporium for the Dutch in the Gulf.²⁰¹

For the period after 1622 there is little information available about Portuguese activities in the Gulf. Nevertheless, we can at least conclude that Portuguese influence did not end after the destruction of Hormuz. Between 1622 and 1729 there seems to have been an almost continuous commercial and a considerable military presence in the Gulf. Indeed, the profitability of Portuguese enterprise in the Gulf region increased after 1622. Once opened to all foreign ships, the huge volume of business brought massive investment. For example, the Portuguese invested annually in the spice and cloth trades

¹⁹⁷ Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-1623*, pp. viii, xiii.

¹⁹⁸ Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 194.

¹⁹⁹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xliii.

²⁰⁰ As an eyewitness, William Foster saw the Persians still there in 1627. For five days they sent their vessels across to Hormuz to fetch stones for this purpose from the ruins of the old town. See Foster, 'A view of Ormuz in 1627', p. 161. See also G. Schweizer, 'Bandar Abbās und Hormoz', p. 12; Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 151.

²⁰¹ T. Herbert, *Travels in Persia*, (London, 1928), p. 43; Birdwood, *Report on the old Records of the India Office*, p. 213.

just between Muscat and Basra more than 500,000 *ashrafi*, or twice the revenue of Hormuz in 1622.²⁰² In addition, in 1625 they established a factory at Bandar Kung.²⁰³ In agreement with Shah Abbas, the Portuguese were to enjoy a share of all customs dues levied on goods entering the port, in the same way that the English did at Gombroon.²⁰⁴ In fact, the Portuguese recognized, albeit too late, that by welcoming foreign merchants and investing in commercial facilities they could influence trade without the use of force.

In the aftermath of Hormuz the Portuguese made Muscat their new regional headquarters and tried to raise it to the stature of Hormuz, in both trading activity and missionary work.²⁰⁵ Persian plans to follow up their victory at Hormuz came to nothing, but Muscat was still vulnerable to attack and proved a very troublesome possession. Most of these problems stemmed from internal changes in Oman. After he defeated the last ruler of the Al-Juboor dynasty in Oman, Nassar bin Marshad Al-Yarubi proceeded to unify most of the Omani territories under his rule.²⁰⁶ Under Nassar's leadership there was a drive to expel the Portuguese from Oman. In 1643 the Imám took Suhar, and in 1648 he succeeded in attacking all the Portuguese outposts on the Omani coast except Muscat and Matrah. The Imám Sultan bin Saif Al-Yarubi (1649-79), who succeeded Imám Naser, rapidly completed the objectives of his predecessor.²⁰⁷ Muscat was captured in 1650,²⁰⁸ and Sultan bin Saif succeeded in maintaining a formidable fleet of warships, comprising mainly captured Portuguese vessels supplemented by others purchased from the VOC and EIC. Thus, from the reign of Imám Sultan bin Saif the

²⁰² See Chapter Two, section 2.

²⁰³ See Map VI.

²⁰⁴ Falsafī, *Zendaġané Shah`Abbās Awāl*, vol. 4, p. 1562; Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, p. 59.

²⁰⁵ *DRI*, vol. VIII, Liv. xvi, p. 347; Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, p. 191.

²⁰⁶ A. Al-Salmī, *Tuhfat al-'a'yān Bi-Sirat 'Ahl 'Umān*, p. 50.

²⁰⁷ S. Al-Izkawī, *Kašf Al-Gūmma al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-ummha*, p. 105; P. Vine, *The Heritage of Oman*, pp. 80-87.

²⁰⁸ A. H. Al-Salmī, *Tuhfat al-'a'yān Bi-Sirat 'Ahl 'Umān*, p. 51.

Omanis prosecuted a war against the Portuguese in the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea, along the east coast of Africa, and on the Indian coast, that would continue well into the eighteenth century.²⁰⁹

Even then the Portuguese were still able to involve themselves in the Gulf's commercial affairs and to have some success against the shipping of their enemies.²¹⁰ This continued presence was nurtured by more stable relations with Persia. In 1625 the shah agreed to a tribute payment for Qishm. Furthermore, Portuguese merchants continued to have a considerable trade with Basra, and they established an important factory there.²¹¹

Yet, in spite of their commercial resilience, after the fall of Hormuz the Portuguese could no longer act as masters of the Gulf. Its loss was a staggering blow to their economic policy in particular since Hormuz had been Portugal's main economic centre in the region. For Barendse, the loss of Hormuz led to the 'restructuring' of Portuguese trade in the Gulf, and his work has done much to illustrate how this came about.²¹² Subrahmanyam agrees with this assessment, for the Portuguese still held Muscat which became 'an important staging post for Portuguese trade to Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul'. The loss of Hormuz caused some dislocation; but the loss of Muscat had far worse consequences.²¹³

The events of 1622 had repercussions for the international struggle between Europe's maritime empires, even if Hormuz had been a relatively easy victim.

²⁰⁹ Al-Izkawi, *Kašf Al-Gūmma al-jāmi Lli-akhbār Al-ummha*, p. 105; G. Ames, 'The straits of Hormuz Fleets', p. 400.

²¹⁰ Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, p. 65; Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 154.

²¹¹ Slot, *The Arabs of the Gulf 1602-1784*, p. 65.

²¹² Barendse, *The Arabian Seas*, pp. 341-44.

²¹³ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*, pp. 157-58.

Conclusion

‘...when recently the Portuguese, by crossing this our sea [*este nosso mar*] discovered the East Indies, they came there with peaceful and not warlike intentions towards the rulers and peoples of those parts, signifying to them that they sought nothing from them but friendship and commercial relations. However, in those places where we were ill-received and all kinds of peace and trade were denied us we took up arms and, having conquered them by force, placed them under our rule.’¹

Thus ran an assessment in the *Livro das Cidades Fortalezas* (1581) of Portugal’s experience in the East. When denied peaceful freedom of trade, the Portuguese crown took what it needed by force.

In the first chapter of this study, which dealt with the economic history of Portugal in the fifteenth century, it was suggested that the Portuguese crown had financial problems, and that the long process of exploration and discovery had strong economic motives. As King Manuel famously declared, ‘the purpose of launching the expedition for discovering the sea-route to India is to spread Christianity and to grab the wealth of the East’.² After nearly a century and a half of enterprise in the East, Portugal was still a relatively poor country.³ There is a well-known Arab saying: ‘If the landlord beats the drum, all the family members will dance’, and that is exactly what happened during the ‘Portuguese era’ in the East. When they first arrived, Portuguese captains were almost invincible; but they soon began to shirk their military responsibilities and paid more attention to enriching themselves through trade. The spread of this malaise accelerated after 1580. In seeking out the profits of the East, to the neglect of its security, the Portuguese sowed the seeds of their empire’s destruction.

¹ See Villiers, ‘The Estado da India in South Asia’, in *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 42, citing Thomaz ‘Estrutura politica e administrativa do Estado da India no seculo XVI’, p. 8.

² See Chapter One, section 1, pp. 69-70.

³ J. Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640*, p.167.

But what was this ‘empire’? We really need to examine objectively Portugal’s achievements in the East. It is still quite common to read about the rapid and lasting diffusion of Portuguese military, economic and political influence in the Arabian Gulf, Indian Ocean and beyond.⁴ The result was a vast ‘empire’, not necessarily of territory along Spanish lines, but of outposts, trade routes and maritime violence. During the sixteenth century this system extended from East Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf in the west, to the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago and China Sea in the east. Practical results included a substantial proportion of direct European-Asian trade and a strong position in the internal Asian country trades.

From this re-examination of the Portuguese presence in the Gulf – an important node in the system described above – it is clear that their contemplated Afro-Asian empire never developed beyond the limited boundaries of isolated Portuguese strongholds. For a time the Portuguese created an emporium; but they did not found an empire. The main problem posed by the Portuguese was that they built a vast ‘empire’ without expanding and developing its constituent economies. As Villiers points out, in Southeast Asia, as in the Indian Ocean more generally, the Portuguese did not open up any new trade routes or introduce any new goods into the trading network.⁵ Local coastal trade continued exactly as it had for centuries before the Portuguese arrived, and longer voyages along the principal trade routes of the area were still made by indigenous shipping, more often than not without the permission of the Portuguese authorities or *Cartaz*, as discussed above.⁶ They depended on the old commercial system, with a few administrative modifications, and the products of the

⁴ See the introduction and the researches in *Nadwet AL-derasat Al- Omaniah; Nadwet Ras Al-khaimah Al- Tarekheiah*’.

⁵ Villiers, ‘The Estado da India in South Asia’, p. 53.

⁶ See Section 2.4, above.

Indian Ocean. This was admittedly a network with huge potential. What they added to the existing system were new types of tax, including their quintessential *cartaz*. From the foundation of the *Estado da Índia*, Portugal lost sight of its imperial obligations under the effect of what Verlinden called the ‘hypnosis’ of spices.⁷ Surely it was Portuguese shipping, not the necklace of fortresses around the Asian littoral, which was designed to control the Indian Ocean. Even ‘control’ might be as unhelpful a concept as ‘empire’ in this respect.⁸

In real terms Portugal’s impact on the Gulf region was not really commercial – there were few economic developments during their occupation. They found no new products for export; they developed no new markets for European products in the East; and even at the height of their power they were unable to remove Asian merchants from the commerce of the Gulf and Indian Ocean.⁹ The latter, of course, ran precisely counter to the production of revenues upon which Hormuz depended. Hormuz fits very well Curtin’s definition of a ‘trade diaspora’ – a plural society where two or more cultures existed side by side.¹⁰ The city enjoyed a commanding position at the mouth of the Gulf, and Portugal’s attempt to direct Persian, Arab and even Turkish traffic certainly made an impression. But ships and merchants always operated beyond this Portuguese cordon, and even slipped through it; and the ‘monopoly’ of seaborne trade was very different in character from Hormuz’s

⁷ C. Verlinden, ‘Spices or Empire in Africa, Asia, and Brazil’, in *Maritime History: The Age of Discovery*, ed. J. Hattendorf (Malabar, 1996), vol. I, p. 92.

⁸ G. Winius, *The Black legend of Portuguese India*, p. xvii.

⁹ For this argument in detail see: J. C. V. Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (Amsterdam, 1955); N. Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravans and Companies*; G. Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism* (New Haven & London, 1963); M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofez, *Asian Trade and European influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630* (The Hague, 1962).

¹⁰ P. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, p. 11.

influence prior to the arrival of the Portuguese.¹¹ Even the *cartaz* system, in which the Portuguese took pride, was copied from similar devices in the Indian Ocean and from the trade licences of Hormuz.

It is also clear that the Portuguese did not introduce any new elements into the traditional commerce in the Gulf between the Persian and Arabian ports. Nor even did they try to link the land routes between the Red Sea and the Gulf. They concentrated not on the protection and encouragement of production in the Gulf, but on their ability to control important nodes through which trade passed. The character of navigation in the Gulf – a much smaller sea than it appears, with quite predictable shipping routes – allowed the Portuguese to ensure that a good proportion of vessels were forced to call in at Hormuz.¹² Also, it is to the credit of Hormuz's new masters that the port retained its significance during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Perhaps the Portuguese could claim that trade between the Gulf and India increased under their stewardship, but the revenue of Hormuz was already large when the Portuguese arrived, and about 98 per cent of it came from taxes on transit trade. When Hormuz fell in 1622 the state of its treasury bore witness to lack of investment in the city under Portuguese control. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Portuguese crown and its agents were primarily tax collectors, and that the *Estado da Índia* was essentially a system of organised violence against the indigenous peoples within its boundaries. In the Gulf we have seen evidence of extortion from merchants and rulers alike, and of violence towards its inhabitants. By the 1620s such flagrant exploitation, in tandem with arbitrary acts of violence, left the Portuguese isolated and detested. It

¹¹ See Chapter One, section 1, pp. 59-60.

¹² For a good, recent description of coastwise shipping in the Gulf see R.J. Barendse, *The Arabian Seas: The Indian Ocean World of the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2002), pp. 40-49.

is little wonder that the peoples of the region looked for opportunities to overturn their authority.

This is where we must return to the nature of the Portuguese presence in the Gulf. As noted elsewhere in this thesis, the physical fabric of Portuguese authority comprised a network of military outposts with warships to protect them and to monitor trade and channel it in particular directions. Thus, an infrastructure of military occupation was designed to sustain the parasitic presence of the Portuguese in the East. Given their narrowly focused approach to 'empire', the agents of Portugal relied on this military strength; but in the end the resources deployed were unequal to the task of defence for a variety of reasons outlined above. For the purposes of this conclusion it is worth reiterating some of these reasons.

Excellent tax collectors though they were, on the strength of their political and military performance in the Gulf, the Portuguese had neither the experience nor the personal qualities necessary to maintain an over-extended presence in the East. Viceroys and governors were usually the worst offenders, but they brought a crowd of poor relations with them. We can conclude that although the Portuguese were much involved in business, they were unable to replicate the success of the Dutch and English in the sphere of commercial organisation, and joint stock companies in particular.¹³

As a result of this fact, the decline of the *Estado da Índia*, and of the Portuguese Gulf in particular, arose not only from external pressure from Asian and European enemies, but from internal weaknesses. Corruption figured prominently in this respect. Bribery was rife, especially after the initial period of discovery.

¹³ Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, p. 42. For more recent analysis of centralised Companies versus private entrepreneurship on the Portuguese model, see Barendse, *The Arabian Seas*, 299-301.

Important administrative posts were sold to the highest bidder, or in effect those who collected the most taxes for the Portuguese treasury. Experience and suitability for command were secondary considerations. Again at the risk of simplification, almost every Portuguese official in the east, from the highest to the lowest, was out to make a fortune. As Masselman noted, perhaps the High Judge at Goa in 1552 was one of a few conscientious officials who complained to the king about the state of the *Estado*: 'In India there is no justice, either in your viceroy or those who are to mete it out. The one object is "the gathering of money by every means". There is no Moor who will trust a Portuguese. Help us Senor, for we are sinking.'¹⁴ Even the chronicler Diogo do Couto described the decadence of the Portuguese in India. For example, when he wrote about the *vedores*, in Hormuz or any trade center, they drew handsome salaries for their self-appointed errands and took with them at royal expense all of their friends, together with ample gold for their transactions. He added 'if you should walk into one of their houses, you might think yourself in a warehouse, rather than the home of a *vedor de fazenda*'.¹⁵ Couto devoted a whole chapter to the fraudulent payment of soldiers who were still on the lists after their death, and whose pay was still being drawn.¹⁶ Ultimately, neither the dispatch of new officers from Portugal nor formal power of appointment gave the king real influence over the activities of his distant office holders. 'The state might therefore languish whole its own officials swallowed its incomes'.¹⁷

If the quality of Portuguese manpower can be questioned, then its quantity must also be viewed as a practical barrier to Portuguese success, certainly in the long-

¹⁴ Masselman, *The Cradle of Colonialism*, p. 221.

¹⁵ From a summary of the *Soldado Prático*, in Winius, *The Black Legend of Portuguese India*, p. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-19.

¹⁷ Barendse, *The Arabian Seas*, p. 301.

term. This problem was built into the very structure of Portuguese authority during its formation. In his excitement at the opportunities unfolding before him in Asia, Manuel I ignored the warning from his first viceroy Francisco de Almeida. Almeida was honest with his king about the possible dangers of over-stretched and undermanned outposts, and argued for greater concentration of force at fewer key points.¹⁸ João de Castro also saw clearly how the increase in the number of scattered fortresses was weakening the position of the Portuguese in the East.¹⁹ As a result, the *Estado da Índia* was often dependent on mercenaries and auxiliaries for its defence, whether Indians, Persians, Africans or others. Though they could, and did, fight well for their masters, such troops did not adequately compensate for the shortage of trained Portuguese. Most scholars agree that the Portuguese in the East numbered no more than 10,000 men during the sixteenth century.²⁰ It seems that the shortage of men in the Gulf was linked with Portuguese Goa, because of the high death rate there. Between 1604 and 1630 about 25,000 Portuguese soldiers died in Goa, from diseases such as malaria and cholera.²¹

More important than fanaticism, and perhaps more serious than administrative abuse, was the diplomatic environment in which Portuguese forces had to operate. Failure in this field left the Portuguese establishment badly exposed. The East, as is well known, was of immense size, complexity and diversity of races, religions, cultures, and forms of government. Long distance trade was conducted through a series of entrepôts where merchants and seamen of differing races and beliefs lived pragmatically and in general peacefully together. To somehow penetrate this system

¹⁸ BNL-FG, codice no.1461, Carta de Almeida a Rio de Portugal, Goa, 20 September 1508.

¹⁹ Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India (1497-1550)*, p. 302.

²⁰ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700*, p. 217.

²¹ M. N. Pearson, 'The Portuguese in India' in *The Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge, 1987), vol. I, p. 93.

was the challenge faced by the Portuguese after 1497. From it, they learnt how to divide and how to conquer. In the Subcontinent and Southeast Asia they quickly appreciated that something could be gained from spreading friction between Hindus and Muslims. Divisions in Islam between Sunni Ottomans and Shia Persians brought some hope of achieving similar results in the Gulf.²² Co-operation, however selective, was a necessary part of this strategy. In Asia the Portuguese envisaged that native allies, Muslims included, would help found an empire; native troops would defend it; native women populate it; and native skills benefit its lords.²³ Early on, the Portuguese crown anticipated that its subjects would enter into commercial partnerships with Asian merchants, including Muslims.²⁴ So far as the Gulf was concerned, private traders do seem to have flourished, though we know comparatively little about their operations. However, when it came to the *Estado* and its agents, we may question the choices that were made between conflict, co-operation and simple neglect. Diplomacy required an understanding of the different configurations of politics, power, and people in the East. Popular opinion that likened the arrival of the Portuguese in the Gulf to the coming of a plague reveals something of the problem.²⁵ Generally, though not on every occasion, Portuguese efforts in the diplomatic sphere were deficient and left them unable to maintain alliances with this tribal leader or that local potentate. Cumulatively, the lack of Portuguese friends brought about local resistance to their occupation. A prime, and, as it proved, costly, example was the Safavid dynasty. Despite a near continuous state of hostilities between the Persians and the Ottomans, either active or in suspension, the Portuguese in the Gulf could not

²² Scammell, 'Indigenous Assistance in the Establishment of Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean', pp. 167-68.

²³ *APO*, vol. IV, p. 316.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 542, 819.

²⁵ A. Al-Kalifa, and M. Rice, *Bahrain Through the Ages the History*, p. 38.

exploit the situation to their advantage. By 1622 few non-Europeans had anything to gain from trying to prop up the Portuguese regime.

Weaknesses in the fabric and exercise of Portuguese rule must also be superimposed upon structural changes within the empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Portugal ceased to be an independent kingdom in 1580. The union with Spain played some part in the fall of many of its overseas outposts. Most obviously, the union exacerbated European competition for wealth as an agent of decline, and provided legitimate opportunities for the Dutch and English to dismember Portugal's interests in Asia. We have already demonstrated how the English Company was central to the fall of Hormuz;²⁶ but Hormuz was only one of a number of territorial losses sustained by Portugal in the seventeenth century. The encroachment of other Europeans simply added to the isolation of Portuguese Hormuz in the later sixteenth century. Another problem that became apparent after 1580 was a loss of support from the mother country. This was shown in the crisis of 1622, when the governor of India requested ecclesiastical contributions towards the defence of Hormuz in lieu of support from the crown.²⁷ For the kings of Portugal, Asia was intended to be self-supporting, a source of pure profit. But long before the end of the sixteenth century the *Estado's* governors needed extra funds, and these funds were usually brought from Hormuz.²⁸ In fact, at a strategic level the lack of money, and the impotence of the King of the Union to do anything about the situation in Asia, were important contributory factors in the decline of the Portuguese system. This was as

²⁶ See Chapter Five, section 2.

²⁷ Boxer, *Commentaries of Captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, p. xlii. The governor, therefore, received 100,000 *cruzados* from the coffers of the *Casa da Misericordia* in Goa.

²⁸ Winius, *The Black legend of Portuguese India*, p. xxviii.

evident in Goa as much as it was in Hormuz from the last decade of the sixteenth century.²⁹

Villiers, in his examination of South Asia, seems to accept the truth of the statement with which we opened this conclusion, namely that 'it was...an essential element of Portuguese policy to establish friendly relations with the local rulers and to win the obedience of their subjects, as far as possible by peaceful means'.³⁰ In this there are also echoes of Almeida's explanation in 1506 to the rulers and people of Malacca, that the fortress which he ordered to be built there was solely for the protection of the Portuguese and their merchandise, and not built with any warlike intent. Surely such protection was not required in the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the sixteenth century? Either way, the first encounters between the Portuguese and the peoples of the Gulf were very different in character. The Portuguese came as invaders and acted accordingly.

However, even in the Gulf, the nature of their presence changed as they gradually came to terms with the situation. Within Hormuz and Malacca, the Portuguese scarcely altered the administrative structures that they had inherited from the kings and sultans. Most importantly they kept the system of separate jurisdictions for the different foreign communities, each under its own Shah-bander or Khwaja.³¹ In fact they did little to tamper with the existing laws. In Hormuz, as elsewhere, the people were generally allowed to remain subjected to their traditional laws and under the jurisdiction of their local leaders. Moreover, the Portuguese themselves preferred to graft onto their system the legal system and codes they found in the places where

²⁹ Veen, *Decay or Defeat?*, p. 4.

³⁰ Villiers, 'The Estado da India in South Asia', in *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, p. 40.

³¹ See Chapter Two of this work and P. Purbatjaraka, 'Shabander in the Archipelago' in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 2 (1961), pp. 1-4.

they settled.³² All of this points to an attempt to maintain the status quo in Hormuz. Thus, the Portuguese became more flexible in their treatment of Hormuz's inhabitants – even if they lacked understanding and tact elsewhere – and they came to appreciate the pattern of commerce, in particular the viceroys, governors, and captains who, from the second half of the sixteenth century, spent most of their time dealing with trade rather than the administration of the kingdom of Hormuz. To be fair to Villiers, the Gulf reflects Portugal's pragmatic decision that large-scale conquest was not feasible in the East.³³ Portugal's initial use of force to establish a presence in the Gulf soon gave way to the definition of rights by treaty (in 1515, 1523, 1543, and so on), even if we must assume that the Hormuzians had little scope for negotiation. Unlike Goa and Malacca, Hormuz was never an integral part of the crown's estate; it was part of the *Estado* by treaty.³⁴ Treaties of peace and commerce concluded between the *Estado da India* and local rulers at least demonstrate that the Portuguese fully recognised the legitimacy of those rulers and their right to rule, and show that they did not seek to overthrow them and incorporate their sovereign territories into a greater territorial 'empire'.

³² See for more details A. B. Sousa, *Subsidios para a história Militar Marítima da Índia*, vol. I.

³³ Villiers, 'The Estado da India in South Asia', p. 41.

³⁴ See Villiers, 'The Estado da India in South Asia', p. 43, citing Thomaz 'Estrutura política e administrativa do Estado da India no século XVI', pp. 9-10.

Appendix I: Lists of Rulers and Officials during the period of this study

1. Kings of Portugal

Manuel I (the Fortunate)	1495-1521
João III	1521-1557
Sebastião	1557-1578
D. Henrique, regent	1578-1580
Felipe I (II of Spain)	1580-1598
Felipe II (III of Spain)	1598-1621
Felipe III (IV of Spain)	1621-1640

2. Viceroys (v.) and Governors (g.) of India

Dom Francisco da Almeida (v.)	1505-1509
Afonso da Albuquerque (g.)	1509-1515
Lopo Soares de Albergaria (g.)	1515-1518
Diogo Lopes de Sequeira (g.)	1518-1522
D. Duarte de Meneses (g.)	1522-1524
D. Vasco da Gama (v.)	1524
D. Henrique de Meneses (g.)	1524-1526
Lopo Vaz de Sampaio (g.)	1526-1529
Nuno da Cunha (g.)	1529-1538
D. Garcia de Noronha	1538-1540
D. Estêvão da Gama (g.)	1540-1542
Martim Afonso de Sousa (g.)	1542-1545
D. João de Castro (v.)	1545-1548
Garcia de Sá (g.)	1548-1549
Jorge Cabral (g.)	1549-1550
D. Afonso de Noronha (v.)	1550-1554
D. Pedro de Mascarenhas (v.)	1554-1555
Francisco Barreto (g.)	1555-1558
D. Constantino de Bragança (v.)	1558-1561
D. Francisco Coutinho (v.)	1561-1564
João de Mendonça (g.)	1564
D. Antão de Noronha (v.)	1564-1568
D. Luís de Ataíde (v.)	1568-1571
D. António de Noronha (v.)	1571-1573
António Moniz Barreto (g.)	1573-1576
D. Diogo de Menezes (g.)	1576-1578
D. Luís de Ataíde (v.) (second appt.)	1578-1581
Fernão Telles de Meneses (g.)	1581
D. Francisco Mascarenhas (v.)	1581-1584
D. Duarte de Menezes (v.)	1584-1588
Manuel de Sousa Coutinho (g.)	1588-1591
Matias de Albuquerque (v.)	1591-1597
D. Francisco da Gama (v.)	1597-1600
Aires de Saldanha (v.)	1600-1605
D. Martim Afonso de Castro (v.)	1605-1607
D. Frei Aleixo de Meneses (Archbishop) (g.)	1607-1609
André Furtado de Mendonça (g.)	1609
Ruy Lourenço de Távora (v.)	1609-1612
D. Jerónimo de Azevedo (v.)	1612-1617

D. João Coutinho (v.)	1617-1619
Fernando de Albuquerque (g.)	1619-1622

Sources: A. Marques, *History of Portugal*; Bocarro, *Década 13 da História da Índia*; Baião (ed.) *Historia da Expansão Portuguesa no Moundo*, 3 vols; C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825*; *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, 4 vols, ed. A. S. Rego; *Documentos Remetidos da Índia ou Livro das Monções*, ed. Raymundo A. B. Pato, 4 vols.

3. Captains of Hormuz Fortress

Pero de Albuquerque	1515-1518
D. Garcia Coutinho	1518-1522
João Rodriguez de Noronha	1522-1524
Diogo de Melo	1524-1528
Cristóvão de Mendonça	1528-1530
Belchior de Sousa	1530-1532
António da Silveira	1532-1535
Martim Afonso de Mello Jusarte	1535-1537
D. Pedro de Castelo Branco	1537-1538
Doutor Pero Fernandes	1538
D. Fernando de Lima	1538 (May)
Fernão de Ávares Cernache	1538
Martim Afonso de Melo Jusarte (second appt.)	1538-1545
Luis Falcão	1545-1547
D. Manuel de Lima	1547-1548
Bernalldim de Sousa*	1548-1550
D. Alvaro de Noronha	1550-1555
Antão de Noronha*	1555-1561
D. Pedro de Sousa	1562-1565
D. Gonçalo de Meneses	1581-1583
Matias da Albuquerque	1583-1587
Ruy Gonçalves da Camara	1587-1589
Pedro Coutinho	1602-1604
Diego Moniz Barreto*	1604-1608
Garcia de Melo*	1608-1612
Luis da Gama	1613-1619
D. Luis de Sousa*	1619-1620
D. Francisco de Sousa	1620-1621
Simão de Mello	1621-1622

* Period of office uncertain

Sources: D. Farinha, *Os Portugueses no Golfo Pérsico, 1507-1538*; *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, 4 vols, ed. A. S. Rego; *Documentos Remetidos da Índia ou Livro das Monções*, ed. Raymundo A. B. Pato, 4 vols

4. Kings of Hormuz

Turan Shah IV	1514-1522
Mohammed Shah II	1522-1534
Salgur Shah II	1534-1544
Fakhru Al-Din Turan Shah V	1544-1564
Mohammed Shah III*	1564-1565
Farkh (Faroq) Shah I	1565-1582
Turan Shah VI*	1582-1598

Feruz Shah	1598-1610
Mohammed Shah IV	1610-1622

* Regnal dates uncertain

Sources: J. Aubin, 'Le Royaume d'Ormuz Au Début du XVI^e Siécle,'; J. Qāemmaqmāi, *Hormuz dar Rawabut Iran wa Portugal; The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, trans. W. F. Sinclair.

Appendix II: Documents in Translation

Document 1. Letter from Cristóvão de Mendonça to King João III, concerning events in India and the administration of the fortress of Hormuz. Portuguese. Dated 18 November 1529.

ANTT, *As Gavetas*, vol. X, Gav. xx, Maço 2-27. pp. 254-58.

[Greeting]

I have informed your Excellency through Manuel de Macedo about conditions in the kingdom of Hormuz. After the previous governor had left Hormuz, Simão da Cunha was despatched to Bahrain. I will tell your Excellency what has happened there.

The king of Hormuz had appointed Reis Bader Al-Din, a relative of the vizier Sharaf Al-Din, as viceroy in Bahrain. When your Excellency ordered Sharaf Al-Din to be arrested, the governor gave an order to dismiss Reis Bader Al-Din from Bahrain on the ground that he had done serious damage in the country. Hence he dispatched Belchior de Souza, the Portuguese captain of the navy at that coast, with three or four vessels and accompanied by a Muslim vizier, with letters from the king to Reis Bader Al-Din, ordering him to hand over the fortress to the new vizier who had posted him there. The governor ordered Belchior de Souza to arrest Bader Al-Din and bring him as a prisoner. Belchior de Souza knew that Bader Al-Din had received information about his plans; he handed the letters to him as soon as he arrived there. Yet Bader Al-Din refused to hand over the fortress and was extremely cautious. De Souza informed the governor of Hormuz of this event.

Fifteen days before he left, the governor of Hormuz decided to send Simão da Cunha to capture the fortress and, if possible, arrest Bader Al-Din as well. He took with him 455 soldiers, including all the knights who had escaped death in Mombassa, and others who were in Hormuz at that time. When Simão Cunha had reached Bahrain, Reis Bader Al-Din informed him that he considered himself under the subjection of the king of Hormuz and that he had no desire to fight; on the other hand, there were many who did not agree with him in this point of view. Simão da Cunha noticed that contrary to what he had heard, the fortress of Bahrain was most formidable. He had been told that it was a weak establishment. When the soldiers embarked they set up their artillery, which immediately bombarded the fortress until the gunpowder ran out. He sent to Hormuz for more, and when the assistant arrived, all of his men were sick. By the following day the soldiers became sicker so that there was no one strong enough to carry the artillery to the ships. They were no longer able even to walk to the ships to board. In the end a lot of ships and warriors were sent from Hormuz to bring the ships and the soldiers back. Of the total 455 soldiers who went there, no one was left alive and not suffering from the epidemic. Two hundred of them had died, and about the same number were very ill and on their way to death. Simão da Cunha has died of the fever, and also Francisco de Mendonça and many of the knights. Considering the number who came back ill, it seems to me that if we do not lose a hundred of them it will surely be a miracle. Relative to the fort and the town, I believe that your Excellency has been informed by Manuel de Macedo about its condition. After de Macedo left, Khwaja Ibrahim was arrested, as I wrote to you. Diogo de Melo left Hormuz with the governor [of India] without paying anything of what he owed to the king of Hormuz, and so did his assistants, as I wrote to your Excellency in this matter I have discharged what I owe to my lord and to your Excellency, with the aim of spreading justice and peace. I have already informed your Excellency of the damage that de Melo has done to your interests, and they have brought to you a copy of the decree I have issued regarding the benefit of the king of Hormuz. I do not know whether that will have reached you without being falsified.

According to the investigation conducted by the governor of India and the official, if it has not been concluded in lawful fashion your Excellency may hold them both responsible. With regard to the taxes in this kingdom, I am doing my utmost to serve your Excellency and

to exact payment. However, in view of the sum that is required to be paid, which was forty thousand ashrafi before the governor increased it, I believe that it will be difficult for the king of Hormuz to pay it, unless your Excellency orders that the king should not be further constrained. This I cannot see to without an order from your Excellency, if you keep me in my position for a few years more, to pay your Excellency before the end of the year.

Bahrain, the most important region in the kingdom, is now in revolt against the kingdom and has so far not paid anything. If it were restored and forced to pay again, as in the past, it would make payment easier for the king of Hormuz. As your Excellency knows, Shaikh Rashid is performing the function of vizier. He is a good man, and in my view he is highly loyal to us, but lacks the character to face such serious problems as those in Hormuz. My lord, in comparison the loyalty of the Reis Sharaf Al-Din to you, is less than that of Shaikh Rashid, but this Muslim has not been born in these islands so he is unable to govern this kingdom, because he is very diffident and afraid. Such a man will not be able to collect the taxes properly. As soon as the governor had left the city of Hormuz I received news of the Turks. Before this news reached me I came by information that the Turkish Reis, called Mir Husain, had captured Aden and had also captured all the ships and prevented them from leaving the harbour lest they should let us know about this, and that four gallees had put in to Dhofar to secure it. At the beginning of every year I send somebody to get information about the movements of the Turks.

Regarding the news of Basra, I am still at war with it because its inhabitants [the Arab tribes] refused to hand over the ships they have. If the previous captains of the fortress of Hormuz had done as I have been doing for some time to make them hand them over, we would now be at peace with them. However, I will never make peace with them as long as I am in this city, not until they hand over the ships that are seriously harmful to your Excellency's interests. As I have already written to your Excellency, the fortress of Hormuz has been poorly maintained by previous captains. I now have only four or five barrels of gunpowder and very little artillery, even though this fortress should have more than that of Rhodes. As your Excellency knows, people from all over the world call in here in Hormuz: Genoese, Venetians, Turkish, Jews, Armenians, and other people. The first thing they wish to do is to visit the fortress. Of course we cannot allow them to do this because inside it is just like a straw loft.

What I really must say to your Excellency is that, if the Turks should want to capture any place of ours this year, the first would be this fortress, for it is very close to the Straits of Hormuz and also it is your most important possession in these parts. As it is of enormous advantage to your Excellency, therefore, you should supply the things it needs by not giving the governors direct orders to do that.

I have completed half of the extension of the fortress, yet the governor [of India] has blamed me for not finishing it. He wants to extend the fortress without assigning more than four hundred soldiers, and I think that there is no call to do so as long as he refuses to put more soldiers in it, because a large fortress with a small garrison would be even weaker.

I have already told your Excellency of the harm that is done by the governors of India who arrive here, and you do not allow them to come to Hormuz only in case of necessity, but they still arrive here. I would remind your Excellency once more that there is nothing so damaging to your Excellency's interests than this, for their arrival here leads to Hormuz being emptied of all inhabitants, because these people take over their houses, and at the end of their stay, they set fire to those houses and run out. In addition, the Muslims here are suffering very much from these governors, and they denied their behaviors as well. No one can punish them.

I beg your Excellency to be sure that in my capacity as captain of the fortress I am much troubled by the governors' arrival here. I have completed the period of my position, and I think the governor [of India], Nunho da Cunha who came here recently, has told you about my term of service, although my news is very painful for him to tell you, because he stands by and agrees with the work of Diogo de Melo. I will tell your Excellency all this in detail as

soon as I arrive [in Lisbon]; I say these words because I think it will be useful for your Excellency

In view of the sensitivity of the post, the translators of this fortress should be competent and intelligent men. When Nunho da Cunha arrived, António do Loronha took over the position of translator. He is now with your Excellency, and has been replaced by a young man who knows neither Persian nor any other language. In addition to this he is a great thief.

There is another thing; Diogo de Melo has made a complaint about me to the governor. He claims that I issued decrees that caused him harm and trouble. De Melo has therefore cast aspersion on my regulations, which I have refuted with exploration. The governor ordered a secret investigation to be initiated and the witness testimony to be sent to your Excellency. I do not think the governor himself was unbiased in this case; because his secretary never leaves the house of de Melo all night. The governor has said that Lopo Vaz made a mistake when he put me in charge instead of himself in this case. I hope that your Excellency will investigate these matters and be assured that I will not be unjust to Diogo de Melo, because everybody knows that he is a relative of mine. What really forced me to do as I have done was the strongly-worded letter that your Excellency sent to all the governors concerning the injustice and harm that the inhabitants of Hormuz suffered for a long time, which is still in my possession and in all matters I am governed by the letter, together with my conviction that service to God and to your Excellency requires me to act with justice and without any other consideration. What I have done has been influenced only by my wish to serve your Excellency because it is above all other considerations. I beg your Excellency to consider and fully understand this.

Written in Hormuz, 18 November 1529.

I kiss Your Excellency's hand.

Cristóvão de Mendonça

Document 2. Letter from Reis Rukn Al-Din, vizier of Hormuz, to Reis Sharaf Al-Din Al-Falī, the exiled former vizier of Hormuz concerning relations between Maneng Bin Rasid, the king of Al-Hasa, and Reis Mohammed, the governor of Bahrain. Persian. Dated 1545?

ANTT, *As Gavetas*, vol. IV, Gav. xv, Maço 11-2. pp. 357-9.

[Greeting and short preamble]

I understood all that you have written to me. I can tell you that all regions [in the Gulf] are quiet, and that there is nothing going on in Hormuz worth writing about. As for your orders to me to serve the king of Hormuz, God knows how I have served and advised him. In fact, he has a different temperament and does not take my advice or that of others into consideration. He acts according to his view. It seems to me that he cannot agree with anyone. I want you to know that he bears the responsibility for all his behaviour. I pray to God and hope that you will come as you said in your letter, and that in Goa you will learn the news of his work here.

News of Reis Mohammed, the ruler of Bahrain, he is in good health, but the king of Al-Hasa, Xequé Maneng Bem Rasyd [Shaikh Mānini Ibn Rashid], has made an advance on Qatif and he is determined to seize Bahrain. Several messages passed between them and they signed an armistice. After a few days, the king of Al-Hasa returned, with a great number of his soldiers, to re-establish himself in Qatif in a new fortress he ordered to be built and he demolished the old one. As soon as his soldiers and the rest of his assistants knew of his intention to fight against the Muslims of Bahrain, most of them left him with their wives and children. Among them were Mafamed Bem Raaal³⁵ and Çaim Bem Raaal and their families, who put themselves under the service and protection of the governor of Bahrain. In addition, a leading Muslim called Xequé Mafamed Bem Muçalaam,³⁶ from Al-Hasa, also went to Bahrain with his relative.

[...] The king of Al-Hasa arrived at Basra; the chieftains of that place opened the gates of the city to him and offered him their allegiance as king. At that time the ruler of Bahrain took advantage of this and with some Persians and Arabs attacked Qatif. He burnt a hundred and fifty of his ships large and small. After a while, the king of Al-Hasa heard that the ruler of Bahrain was burning his ships. Hence, he ordered all the vessels belonging to the merchants of Bahrain at Basra to be taken, with their goods. But the leaders of the city rejected this course of action and drove the king of Al-Hasa out of their city, offering the rule of Basra to one of his relatives called Xequé Yhayha.³⁷ Moreover, they returned to the merchants of Bahrain their ships and their merchandise.

Shaikh Yahia is a good man because he is seeking good relationships with the Portuguese. The king of Al-Hasa returned back to his own city with his dream of control over Bahrain. It will not be so difficult for him to do this because he has great power and many warriors.

After I heard of all these new events in the Gulf, I joined the captain of Hormuz Martim Afonso de Melo and his secretary to tell him of this news. I advised him that it is necessary to send a Portuguese fleet towards Bahrain Island to protract that place; otherwise, they should build a fortress in the port of Qatif to ensure the security of Bahrain. However, the captain and his secretary said that the king of Portugal had spent a lot of money in India and Hormuz; therefore, he could not send such a fleet to Bahrain. Hence, the captain suggested that if the ruler of Bahrain has a plan to prepare a fleet to take over the port of Qatif, he should take possession of the taxation from the Persian merchants in Bahrain for one year in order to do it. According to this suggestion, de Melo sent a letter to the ruler of

³⁵ *Recte* Mohammed Ibn Rahal.

³⁶ Shaikh Mohammed Ibn Musllam.

³⁷ Shaikh Yahia.

Bahrain, telling him that this work would be of service to the king of Portugal, and if he won control over Qatiff, he could gain its profits for himself only. They assured him that the king of Hormuz was also in agreement with them as he sent a letter to him as well.

Both Mafamed Bem Raaall and Xequé Mafamed Bem Muçalaam have volunteered to give good aid to the expedition, but this project has not yet been implemented. In addition, I remind you that as part of my service to the king of Portugal, at the beginning of each year and at my own expense, I send some people to Cairo, Aden and elsewhere to find out any new news about the Sultan of the Turks and his navy captains. However, still I have received no information about what you asked me in your letter to find out about the Turks.

I beg you to believe me when I tell you that I am happy to serve God and serve the king of Portugal. I think Your Excellency knows that.

I pray, as do we all, that God may grant you long life and ensure your well-being.

Reis Rukn Al-Din, Hormuz alguazil de Ormuz.

Document 3. Letter from Bernardim de Sousa to King João III regarding the Turkish attack on Hormuz. Goa. Portuguese. Dated 20 November 1545.

ANTT, *As Gavetas*, vol. I, Gav. ii, Maço 10-17. pp. 915-18.

[Greeting and preliminary inquiries]

The governor of India, Martim Afonso, learned, from a Venetian who came from Cairo specifically to notify us, that the Turks will soon arrive in Hormuz. The governor himself had that information from three prisoners who had escaped from Suez; he believed this news especially when Luís Falcão wrote to inform him that he had received the same information and he asked [the governor] to send aid to the fortress [of Hormuz] because of the small number of soldiers there.

As a result of this, the governor knew how Luís Falcão was in great need of those soldiers. He summoned me to the service of your Excellency and required me to accompany my brother, Gorge de Sousa, because if the Turks arrived in Hormuz that would certainly prevent it from being supplied with the provisions and men that it needs. That should have happened before November, which came eight months before my departure. In view of the fact that he was sending me on such an important mission which would be advantageous to you, I set off delightedly and considered it an honour, even though the operation was excessively expensive. This was because of the large numbers accompanying me and because the cost of living in the country [Hormuz] were higher than anywhere here [in Goa].

Seven or eight days after we arrived at Hormuz, we were given a one hundred per cent assurance that the Turks would not come to the Strait of Hormuz during this winter. The sailors who gave us this information assured us that the preparations were actually completed and that about 25 to 30 Turkish galiots had been prepared and set out from Suez to Azebibi³⁸ to relieve it after it was surrounded by the king of the area.

Luís Falcão informed me that six years ago the king of Al-Hasa, Shaikh Mānini, had seized the fortress and city of Qatif from the kingdom of Hormuz. Since that time, the king of Hormuz and his vizier had been asking the former captains for aid to restore that fortress and the city. This is according to our obligations regarding all the fortresses subject to the king of Hormuz, not just this fortress that we captured for him during our period here. However, the former captains used to constantly make excuses, claiming the lack of sufficient soldiers capable of going there, but now there is no excuse because we are here with a group of men who are no longer needed because of the non-arrival of the Turks. The king of Hormuz and his vizier promised to bear all the costs of the campaign, despite the fact that they were not obliged to. They only asked for a hand from the Portuguese soldiers who can accompany me, and likewise some necessary artillery and gunpowder.

Luís Falcão, also was convinced that the restoration of Qatif city and its fortress would be of useful service to your Excellency, as it would give us more respect in the Gulf. After taking all these things into consideration, I thought that it would be more useful to go there, especially since the matter did not represent any risk and required no more than occupying our soldiers, which was better than allowing them to remain idle in Hormuz.

After making this decision, I completed my preparations swiftly and formed a company of 200 Portuguese and between six to seven thousand Persians and Arabs commanded by the king of Hormuz and his vizier Reis Noor Al-Din, the son of the Reis Saraf Al-Din.

³⁸ There is no port or city bearing this name on the Arabian part of the Red Sea coast, which was occupied by the Ottomans at that time. Perhaps the Portuguese mean the Yemeni city of Zubaid, located between Al-Hudaydah and Mocha.

A few days after our departure from Hormuz, we arrived at Bahrain where we remained for a few days in order to complete the assembling of the fleet and to get supplies necessary for the siege, because we were not so far from Qatif.

Immediately after gathering everything that was necessary, I set out again and on the following day we invaded the harbour of Qatif during the night and stepped ashore before dawn. We faced in the city three or four thousand soldiers who killed about thirty or forty of the Persians and two Portuguese. However, after we had killed a larger number of them, they withdraw from the city, from which the inhabitants had already escaped. Since the land was now safe, we landed the artillery on the coast and immediately began bombarding the walls of the fortress. This work took four days, the maximum period that the artillery could sustain. As a result of that work we were only able to bring down one section of the fortress to a height which allowed the use of ladders, I decided to storm the city before bringing down a larger section of the walls, because that operation would take another day. I knew after that, that the king himself was coming to the city to protect it, because he was in Al-Hasa at that time. He commanded thirteenth or fourteenth thousand warriors and a large number of knights and riflemen. In addition to that were the difficulties caused us by the fortress's artillery and guns, and the [announcements of the state of alert which were constantly taking place because of the attacks of those three or four thousand soldiers whom we had faced at the time of disembarking our soldiers. This greatly troubled our soldiers, especially the Persians who were unaccustomed to these efforts.

Despite the dangers of entering the city by means of the ladders, I preferred this way rather than waiting for another attack. However, when the enemy understood our plans to erect these ladders, they began to run out of the fortress from midnight. I acknowledge to your Excellency that this event caused great celebration in our camp. In order to prevent most of them from escaping, the Portuguese climbed the walls during the night and killed some and injured many, an operation which amazed the Muslims accompanying us more than it amazed the frightened enemy, because it was not normal for them to storm a fortress at night.

I found out on the following day that Shaikh Mānini had arrived at a place which was too near to the fortress, and he commanded an army to defend the city. According to my information, no sooner did he learn that the city had fallen, than he returned from whence he had come. After destroying what could be destroyed of the fortress, I handed it over to Reis Noor Al-Din in the same way that we handed over all the fortresses which belong to the kingdom of Hormuz. After that, I returned to Hormuz, because it was nearly time for me to go back to India.

Since all those who accompanied me returned safely except two soldiers, and one who died as a result of disease, divine providence must have been protecting us because the land of Bahrain is not very healthy. Your Excellency was already aware of that circumstance because of the death of the soldiers who accompanied Simão da Cunha. Bahrain does not concede any advantage to Qatif, despite the proliferation of the vegetation and the thickness of the plant cover, because it is impossible to describe a more beautiful place than this in the world.

I hope that God grants Your Majesty a long life, as do we all.

Written in Goa on 20 November 1545.

Bernardim de Souza

Document 4. Letter from the ruler of Hormuz Mohammed Shah to King João III. Arabic and Portuguese. 9 Shaban 932 H. from Sousa, J. de, Documentos Arabicos para a História Portuguesa Copiados dos Originaes da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon, 1790). pp. 162-164.

[Greetings]

The reason for writing this letter to Your Excellency is that the kings of the kingdom of Hormuz, from the old times, came from this royal family. Therefore, after you were one hundred per cent certain about that, Your Excellency ordered me to rule this kingdom. From that day I fixed justice and took away all oppression and injustice against my people. However, your officials in this kingdom did not agree and were not satisfied with what I did, they acted against me all the time. Moreover, they dispatched me to Goa, and took over rule at Hormuz. Not only that, your officials injure my honour and my respect, causing great harm to myself in front of everybody. Your Excellency, I put in your hand this matter, to let it be known that your officials in Hormuz now can issue any order or write any message in my name, so please do not consider their letters. All this happened to me by the order of your captain, Martim Afonso de Mello, who supported and encouraged them in their works. I hope if Your Excellency receives this letter, please will you consider very well what is written inside? If you can remove those people from Hormuz and give your order to the next viceroy in Goa not to hear anything from the tongues of my enemies and not to follow their shameful behaviour. Lastly, do not send your response to this letter to the captain of Hormuz and his assistants, because they never wished peace and comfort for me.

With my regards.

9 Shaban 932 H.

From Mohammed Shah Sultan of Hormuz.

Document 5. Order from Sultan Süleyman to the ruler of Bahrain, Murad Shah. Date 28 Du al-Hijjah 966 H. (1 October 1559).

Turkish documents. Formal Archive. Vol. 3. (p.139, no.1). Printed in *Al-Watheekah*, no. 1, (Bahrain, 1982), p. 149.

You have sent agents to present your submission to the High Court of the Sultan. The Sultan has sent an order appointing you as sanjak beyi of Bahrain. The beglerbeg and government troops who are in that area have been ordered not to interfere in Bahrain. But we heard now that the beglerbeg of Al-Hasa, Mustafa Pasha, with some troops under his command, has invaded Bahrain, which led you to seek help from infidels [the Portuguese]. The infidels captured ships. As Mustafa and his followers deserved dismissal and punishment for attacking without a farmān, they have been dismissed. Another beglerbeg and other begs are being sent to replace them. Murad should do everything to help them get to their posts. You should cooperate with the begs in preventing the infidels from doing harm of our provinces.

Document 6. Command to the *beglerbeg* of Basra. Given to Mehmed on 28 Du al-Hijjah 966 (1 October 1559).

Turkish documents. Formal Archive. MD 3 (p.140, no.1). Printed in *Al-Watheekah*, no. 24, (Bahrain, 1994), p. 185.

The *beglerbeg* of Baghdad sent a letter stating that the *beglerbeg* of Al-Hasa had, without permission, attacked the governor of Bahrain.

[The governor of Bahrain] sought help from the infidels who captured all the ships and galleys [*kādirga*] of the beglerbeg of Al-Hasa. The infidels are about to come and help the aforementioned governor of Bahrain. In order to protect ships in the area of Basra, arms and weapons are needed. This and everything pertaining to that region has been noted. In the past the ruler of Bahrain made his submission to the Porte and was given [Bahrain] as a sanjak. No order has been issued to the aforementioned [beglerbeg of Al-Hasa] to interfere in the affairs of Bahrain. My Noble Command was sent to Murad to send the troops which are there safely to [Al-Hasa].

I have commanded that when the Mehmed arrives: (1) you [the beglerbeg of Basra] should find a suitable person to convey my Noble Command to the aforementioned [the ruler of Bahrain]. (2) You should also send conciliatory letters to him. You should also do your best to return the troops who are there [in Bahrain] to this [your] side without causing any harm. (3) The ships, troops, and weapons which you have ordered are about to be sent. You should also procure the necessary materials and patrol [the area]. (4) You should live in peace with all who show loyalty to the Porte and not interfere in their provinces. When it is necessary to do so, you should inform us [in these cases], act according to my Noble Command, and inform us quickly how you put it into effect and with whom you have sent it. (5) You should also give an account of the state of the troops who remain with him [the ruler of Bahrain]. (6) In my Noble Command, which is going to be sent to Murad, a space is left for the name of the person who is going to carry the letter. You should break its seal and write the name of whoever is appointed, reseal it, and send it. The *beglerbeg* of Al-Hasa is given to Murad who is the governor of Mosul and who must keep and guard the area.

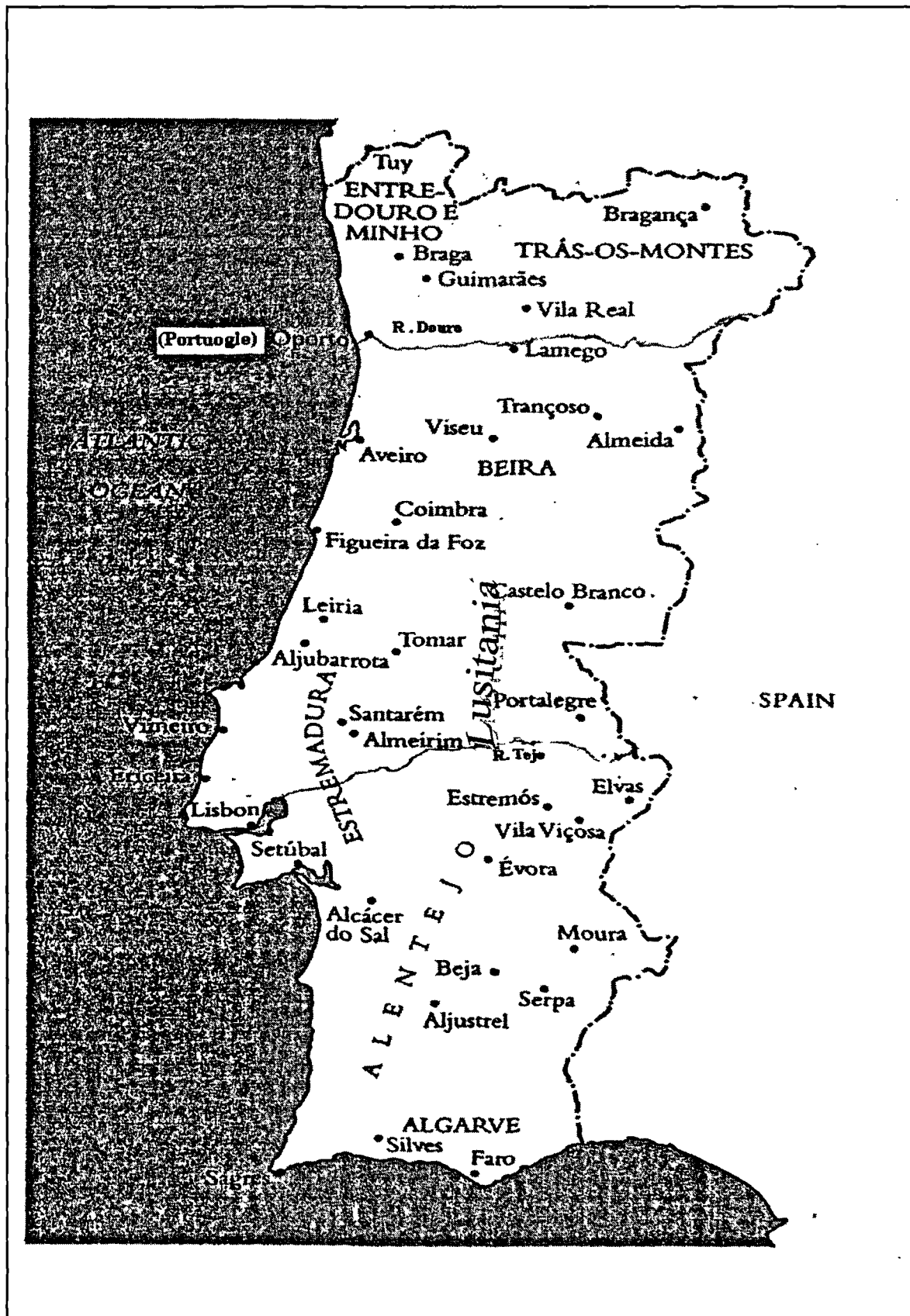
Document 7. Order to the chief of Amirs of Al-Hasa. Dated 10 Safar 981 H. (11 June 1573). Turkish.

Archive of the Cabinet of the Ottoman Prime Minister. *Dafter Mohemat*. Hukm 92 (p.140, no.33). Printed in *Al-Watheekah*, no. 1, (Bahrain, 1982), p. 147.

We received a letter from the Judge of Al-Hasa informing us that Bahrain has more than three hundred villages. He added some information about the situation in Bahrain and the easy way to occupy it. But you [the chief of Amirs of Al-Hasa] did not mention: how could we capture Bahrain, the best time for that, and the artillery that we need to achieve this task? If you received my order ask the Judge of Al-Hasa is he sure about the news which he informed us about Bahrain, and if there is a lack of soldiers on the island and how can we capture it. Ask him is he thinking that we should dispatch our soldiers and what is the specific time for them to arrive there? If so, how many of the total of the army will be enough to occupy Bahrain? Could he give us a rough amount of the revenues of the island? Write to us all the answers of those questions and any further details about Bahrain.

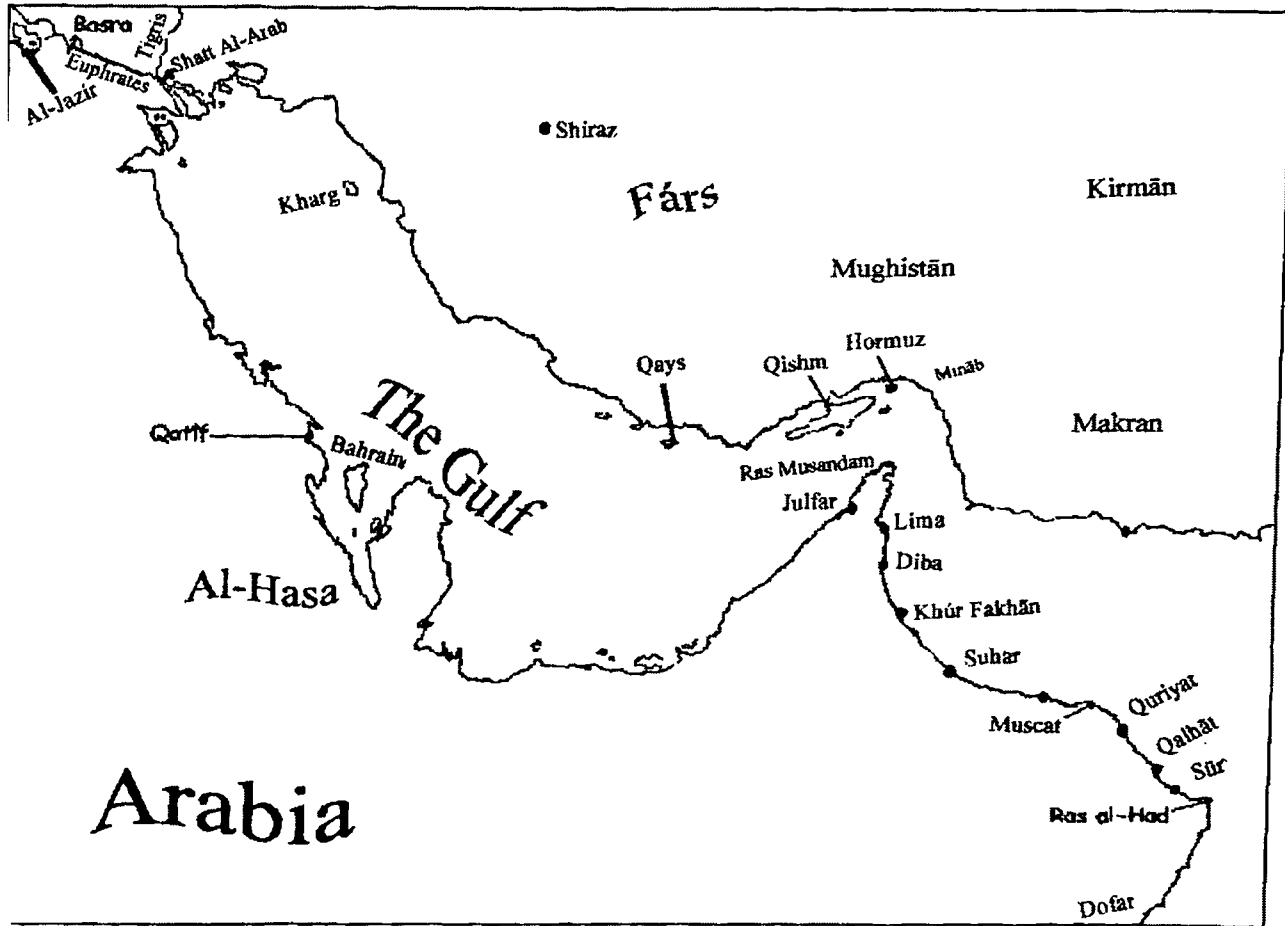
Map I

The original nucleus of the kingdom of Portugal



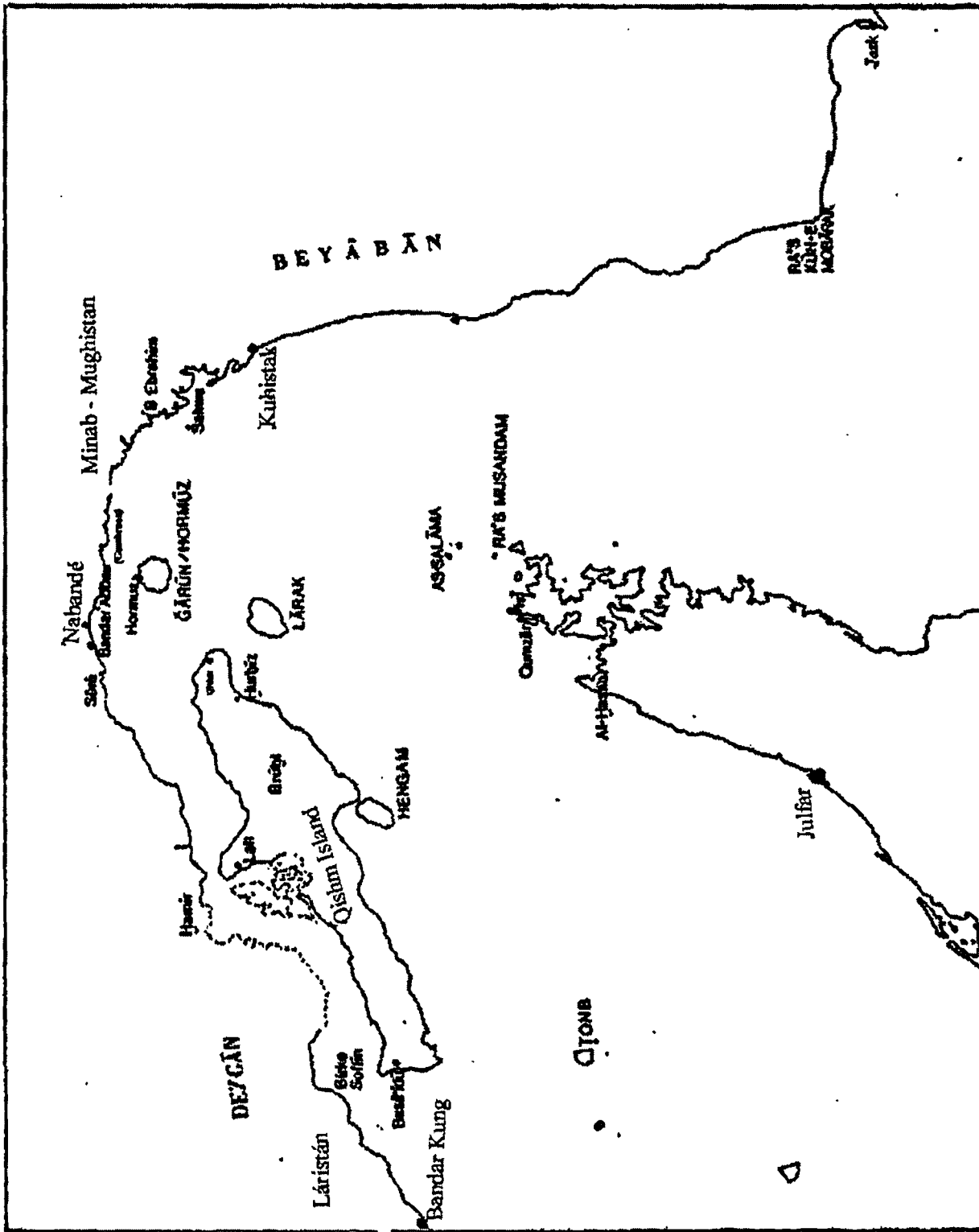
Map II

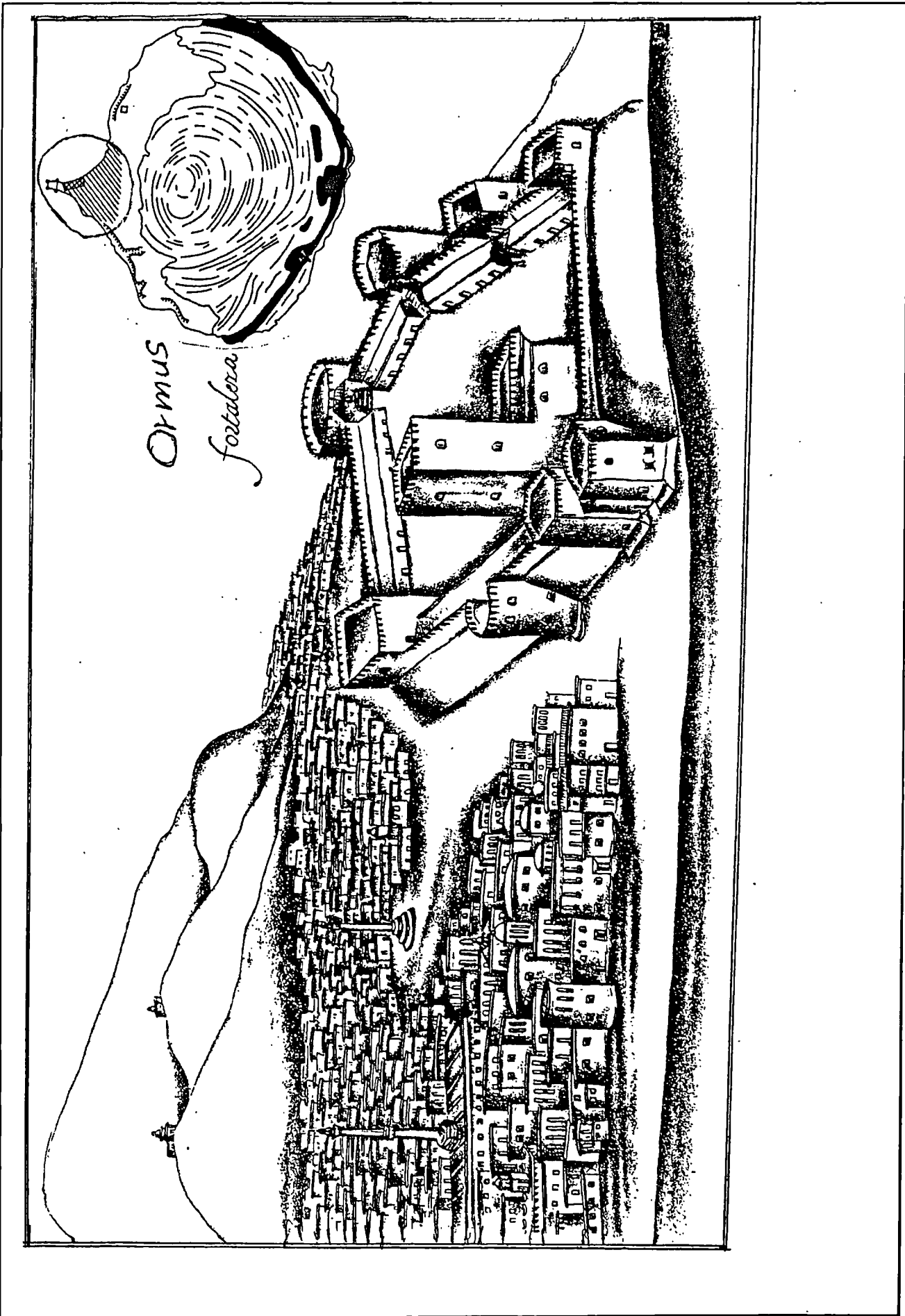
The Gulf and the Arabian coast in the Sixteenth Century



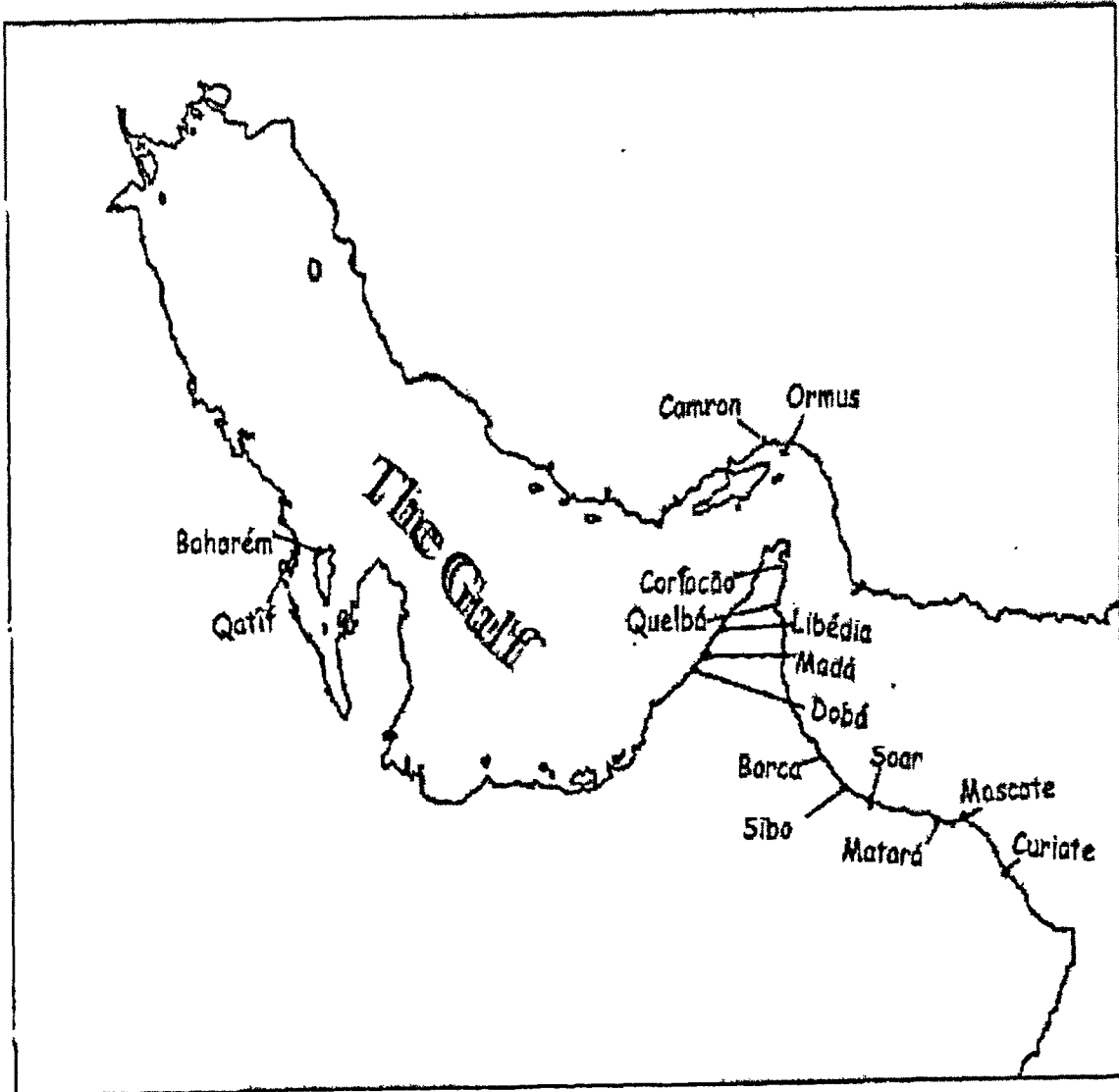
Map III

Hormuz and the entrance of the Gulf





Map - V
Portuguese fortresses in the Gulf and Oman coast



Map VI

The Persian coast in the sixteenth century

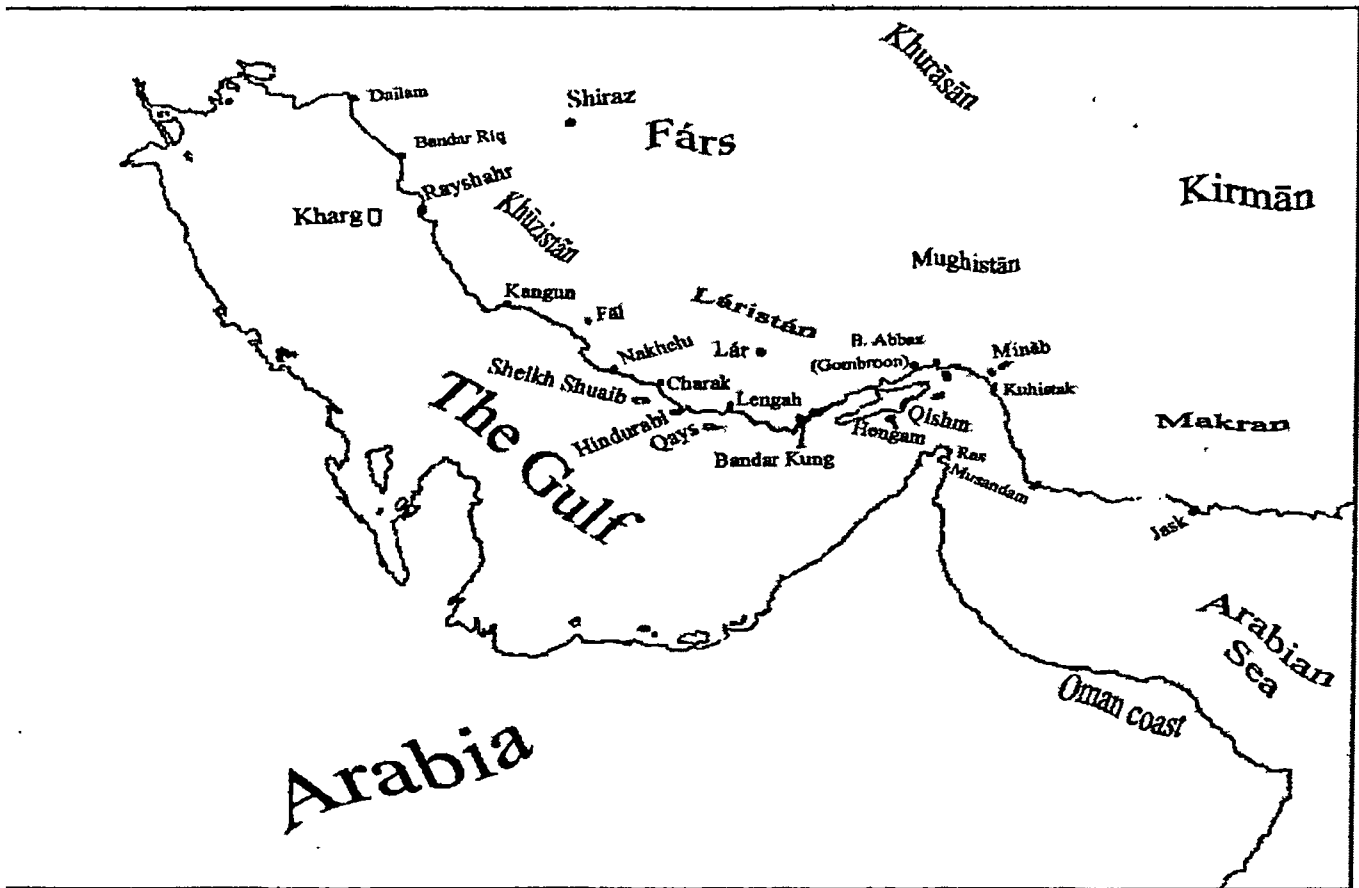
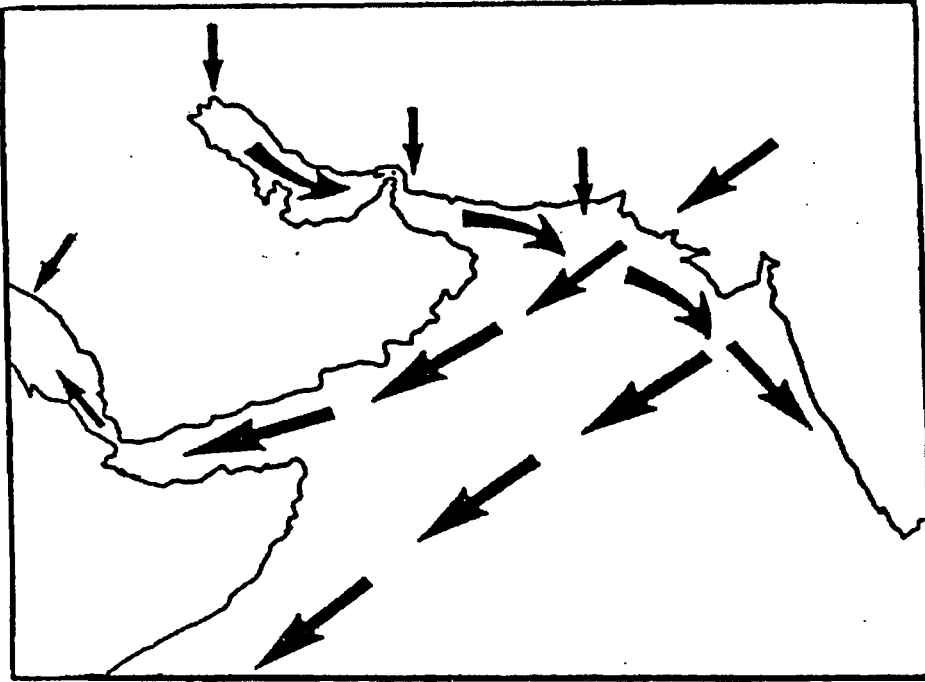
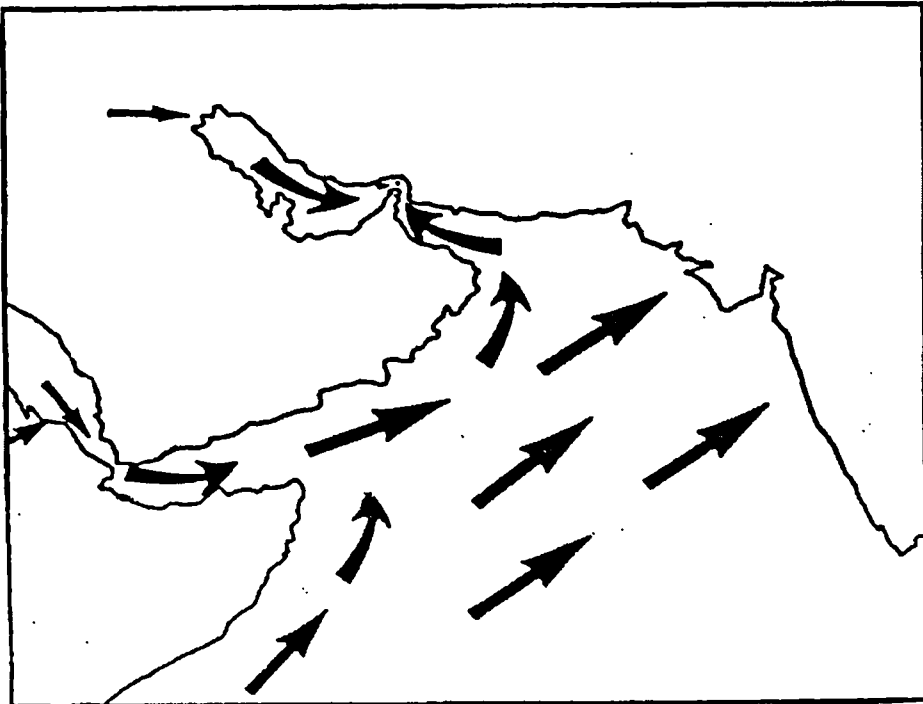


Plate VII

Wind system in the Gulf and Arabian Sea in winter and summer



* Winter



* Summer

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